

**Terrace Row
Presbyterian Church
COLERAINE
1796-1896**



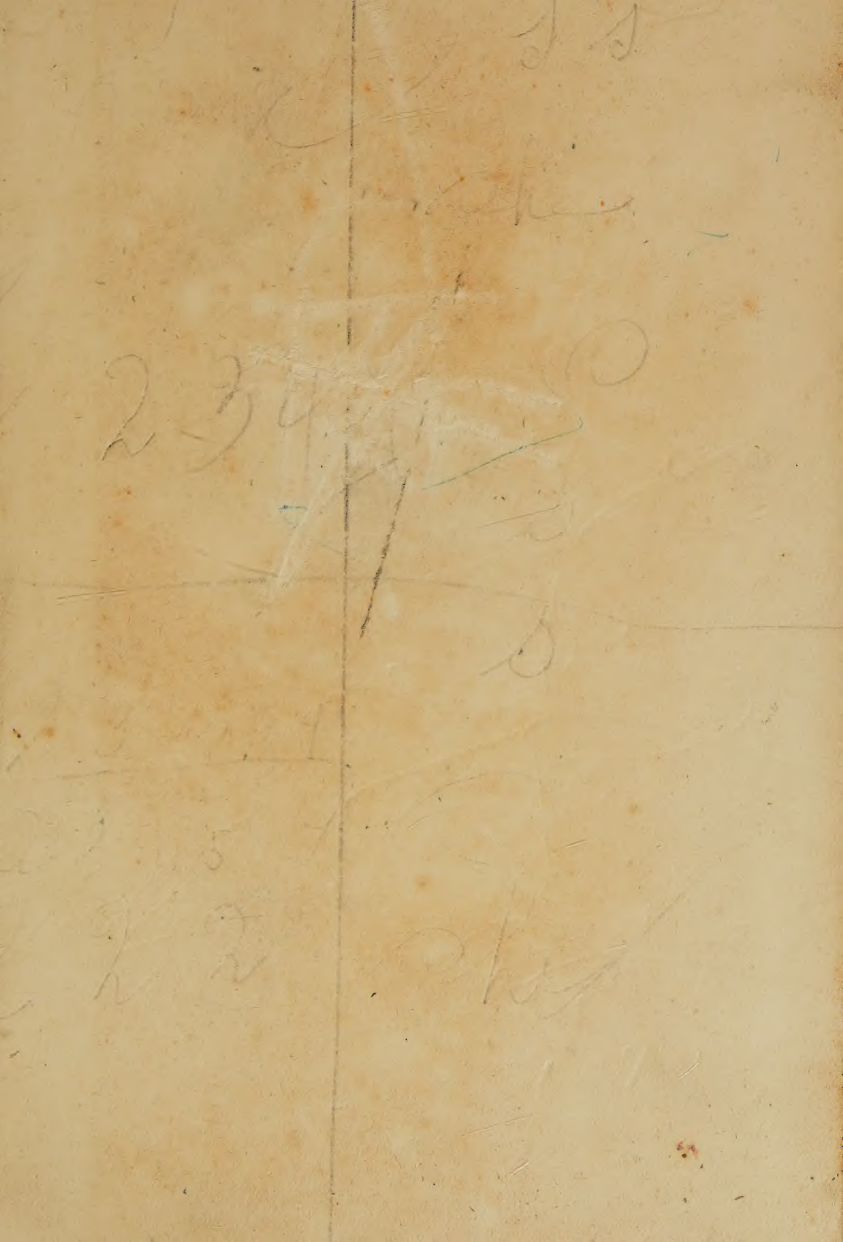
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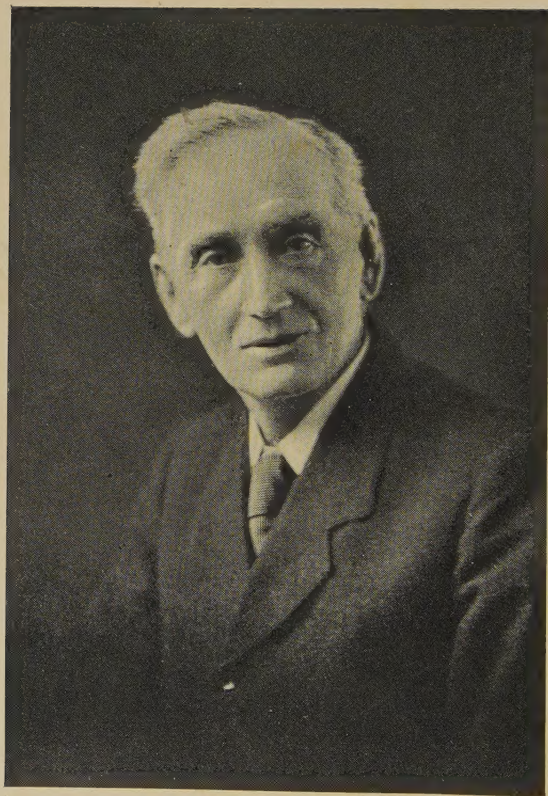
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The Rise and Progress of
Terrace Row
Presbyterian Church,
Coleraine





Yours sincerely,
R. P. Whipple

PORTSTEWART, JUNE 1925

A Century of
Congregational History,
covering the Rise and Progress of
Terrace Row Presbyterian Church,
Coleraine

1796—1896

By
Rev. R. B. Wylie, M.A., LL.D.
The Fourth Minister of the Congregation

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Dedication

I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THIS LITTLE
VOLUME TO MY DAUGHTER,
MRS. IDA M. HAMILTON,
WHO WAS MY MOST ZEALOUS AND EFFICIENT
HELPER, IN MANY DEPARTMENTS,
DURING THE LATTER HALF
OF MY MINISTRY.

R. B. W.

Foreword

EVER since my retirement from active duty, in July 1913, I have felt that I ought to write a brief account of the origin, character, and growth of Terrace Row congregation—my first and only charge.

My chief reason for thinking that I ought to do so, is the fact that I am probably in a better position to do it than anyone coming after me could possibly be, for I have the good fortune to possess documents on the subject from the hand of the first minister, the Rev. James Hunter. I have also gathered much oral information regarding the early years of our congregational life from intimate association for many years with his worthy daughters, Miss Elizabeth and Miss Ann Hunter, who, in their own persons, character, manner of life, and religion, were truly typical of the simple, sincere, and genuinely godly founders of the congregation. These most interesting and intelligent ladies—devoted members of the congregation for the first thirty years of my ministry—became my

FOREWORD

faithful and trusted friends, and from them I learned much about the past life of the congregation and the character of its leading members.

It was in the hope of preserving and putting into permanent form this valuable information, supplemented by gleanings from other quarters, that, towards the end of my 81st year, I constrained myself to sit down and try to discharge this last and sacred duty to the congregation.

It is no doubt, in many respects, a faulty and imperfect production, but, such as it is, I now have pleasure in presenting it, in printed form, to the spirited and loyal people with and for whom it has been my privilege to live and labour for almost half a century.

R. B. WYLIE.

PORTSTEWART,
June, 1925.

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The Rise and Progress of Terrace Row Presbyterian Church, Coleraine

I

EARLY DAYS

THE Secession congregation at Coleraine, now "Terrace Row," had its beginnings about the year 1792, and its first minister was ordained in 1796. There were then two strong Synod of Ulster congregations in Coleraine, but so far no Secession congregation. It may be well, before going into the origin and growth of this particular congregation, to give a brief account of the Secession Church in general, and of its position and strength in Ulster at that time.

The Secession Church of Scotland, from which the Irish came, was an offshoot from the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and was founded by four most earnest and able ministers who seceded in 1733 and formed the "Associate Presbytery." The chief cause of difference lay in the

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relationship of the Established Church to the State, including Patronage, Presentations, Endowments, etc. So earnest and evangelical were these seceding ministers that their spirit and principles at once captured the hearts and minds of the faithful, and adherents and congregations of the new Church multiplied rapidly. One of these ministers, in his zeal, crossed to Ulster in 1746, and soon won so many followers that he was ordained in Lylehill, to supply also Belfast and Lisburn (a large parish for one man, however able and devoted), on 9th July, 1746. But, alas, this happy and progressive body of Seceders soon had trouble and division among themselves. There was actually a disruption of the Associate Synod of Seceders in 1747, at Edinburgh, over the question of the Burgess Oath, and the opposing sections took the names of Burghers and Antiburghers. Their zeal in no way abated; all were earnest and determined Seceders still, though working under different names. These names and distinctions were soon transferred to the congregations formed and flourishing in Ulster. The Seceders here, following the Scotch example almost instinctively, divided themselves into sections, bearing the names

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Burghers and Antiburghers. Though differing on this particular point they continued essentially one, and did not oppose, or compete against, each other, but spread out and occupied different areas, so as to avoid friction or rivalry.

Before 1818 the Antiburghers were for the most part in Antrim, Armagh, Derry, and North Donegal, including the towns of Belfast and Londonderry. The Burghers occupied, first, counties Down, Monaghan, and Tyrone, and afterwards spread into South Derry and parts of Armagh and Antrim. But they always went into a district where the Antiburghers had not settled. Thus they maintained a friendly spirit toward each other, and a common zeal for the one great object of their mission, while differing on one small point. So they continued to work and prosper, until, in 1818, they again cordially united under the name of "The Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, distinguished by the name of Seceders." They then numbered 97 congregations—70 Burghers and 27 Antiburghers—scattered, as we have seen, far and wide over the Northern Counties.

They bore a distinctive testimony, developed a more real and rigid form of piety, preached a more simple Gospel, and empha-

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sised more the necessity for personal piety and godly living than at the time characterised the preaching of the rank and file of the Synod of Ulster ministers; and so they prospered—their influence and numbers growing and spreading until, in 1840, numbering 156 congregations, they united with the Synod of Ulster with its 292 congregations, thus forming the “General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.” Not all, however, of the Secession churches united,—seven or eight ministers and congregations refused to join the General Assembly.

Even as members of the General Assembly the Secession congregations have retained something of their historic identity: *e.g.*, their very prosperous and progressive Widows’ Fund, which they brought with them into the General Assembly, still covers and includes all congregations in the Assembly of Secession origin. Otherwise the two sections of the Assembly have become so assimilated and unified that the old differences are scarcely recognisable.

With this brief account of the origin, character, and growth of the Secession Church—first in Scotland, then in Northern Ireland—we turn to the more limited

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subject of the origin, character, and growth of the Secession congregation at Coleraine, now better known as Terrace Row, or 3rd Coleraine. The first church built by this congregation was situated at the Water-side, near to where the Coleraine Cottage Hospital now stands. It was a plain structure, and must have been badly built, as it soon fell into utter disrepair, almost dilapidation. An old member told me, when I first came to Coleraine, that he remembered having to step over pools of water in the earthen aisle when going to his pew, while many holes through the roof were visible from below.

II

FIRST MINISTER: REV. JAMES HUNTER

I am fortunate in having a brief narrative of the formation and early history of the congregation from the pen of its first minister, Rev. James Hunter. This I received from one of his daughters, a remarkably intelligent and godly woman, whose information and counsel I greatly enjoyed and profited by during the first thirty years of my ministry. The following is Mr. Hunter's narrative, in his own terse and characteristic language:—

NARRATIVE OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE SECEDING CONGREGATION OF COLERAINE.

“From three congregations belonging to the Secession Church in the vicinity of Coleraine this congregation took its rise. These were the congregations of Carneboy (Ballywatt), Crossgare, and 2nd Dunboe—each

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situated about three miles distant from the town. Some members of each, living in town and finding it inconvenient to travel constantly, especially in the winter season, to their respective places of worship, talked the matter over and agreed to ask their ministers occasionally for a sermon, to suit their convenience.

“For many years previous the Secession principles taught in the neighbourhood were acceptable. Large congregations assembled to hear—and it was soon suggested that a new congregation might be formed and supply of sermon obtained from the Presbytery of Derry. †

“Diffidence of encouragement and too delicate fears of intrusion into the boundaries of other congregations said—it is ‘yet four months to harvest,’ but a little experience proved that the fields here were already white to harvest. The first formal petition, which came before the Presbytery of Derry about May 1792, was granted by sending Mr. Leech and other probationers, who preached to crowded audiences and established the cause so far that, in 1795, a new meeting-house was built and a unanimous call offered to Mr. Hunter, a licentiate of the said presbytery, who was

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ordained pastor of this congregation 14th June, 1796. The call was subscribed by 59 heads of families and individuals, of whom seven were ruling elders; namely, Abel Aiken, James Boyd, Thomas Craig, Hugh Young, Joseph Warden, William Holmes, and Joseph Weir.

“In two years it was found necessary to increase the number of elders, and five others were ordained on 4th March, 1798 (John Watson, John Kilpatrick, Robert Boyd, Matthew Clarke, and James Morrison), by the laying on of hands. In the course of a few years the house was well filled, which was the more remarkable, as, within a circle of seven miles from the town, there were 30 places of worship. The new congregation was about this time in a very flourishing and prosperous condition, the members attending well on public ordinances, being fond of preaching, and giving evidence of profit by attention to the duties of private and domestic life. The congregation was not entertained by idle declamation or inapplicable subjects, but the circumstances of young and old, sinners and saints, together, with the speaking providences of the day, were regarded by the teacher as hints to direct him in the choice of subjects. He

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pressed upon his hearers those duties which their relations, temptations, and other circumstances rendered necessary in the Christian life.

“The peace of this happy congregation was interrupted in 1809 by the disaffection of the people to the increase of the Royal Bounty. The elders and leading members, supposing that their principles were in danger, or that something insidious against Presbyterianism was intended, or that the increase would raise ministers so far above their flocks that they would become independent of them, or pretending that they would become tools of government and neglect their duty to their people, or highly displeased because their teachers would be raised so far above them in worldly circumstances, and especially looking at classification with a jealous eye, whispered and prophesied such changes that the common people were greatly alarmed, and knew not what to do. The influence of the elders was so powerful that they prevailed on a great number of the common people to join them. They met and formally disannexed themselves from the Synod, and attempted to induce their minister to come into their measures. He thought himself

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bound to make some sacrifice for the peace of the congregation, but this unreasonable demand decided his course. He saw no reason to break his connection with the Synod, or relinquish the cause he had so solemnly espoused at his ordination. In the end more than forty families deserted the congregation.

“A congregation in a town must, of course, fluctuate. Up to this period sixty-four families had left the congregation by deaths, emigration, removal to Scotland and other parts, or on account of trade, and yet the house was still filled. After the disaffected party saw that their fears were groundless and their prophecies not fulfilled, many returned, but this breach was not healed for more than five years. At present the families are nearly as numerous as ever, being about one hundred and twenty.

“As the founders of the congregation were men of eminent piety and established character, their example, in union with a lively ministry, produced a visible effect and advanced the cause of religion. In a few years, as a result of ministerial visitation, there were few families who did not observe the forms of religion which are constantly practised by the great body of the people.

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But what most advanced the cause of religion was the particular care exercised toward young persons admitted to sealing ordinances, by meeting with them five or six different days and instructing them in doctrinal and experimental religion. Good fruits have appeared; there are more than 200 communicants, and the youth of the congregation have been constantly catechised in the intervals of worship, in the summer season. A Sabbath-school was organised and met in the meeting-house, which has also made a good impression on the minds and morals of the young."

Here the narrative unfortunately ends. No date is given, but we may assume it describes the state of matters in the congregation up to the year 1820. Indeed, it is fairly certain that this account gives us the key to Mr. Hunter's whole ministerial life and work. From other sources this estimate of the quality and methods of Mr. Hunter's preaching and ministerial work is abundantly confirmed.

The next that we know for certain about the congregation brings us to the year 1834, when the congregation moved from Waterside to Terrace Row.

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Terrace Row Church.

Here I am fortunate in having a most interesting minute of the Visitation of the Irish Society in the year 1832, supplied to me by Mr. M. Given, C.E. It reads as follows: "A deputation from the Seceding Scotch congregation (which consists of upwards of 1,000 persons), composed of their minister, the Rev. James Hunter, and two of his hearers, waited upon your deputation and presented a memorial praying for assistance. We visited their meeting-house and found it in a very dilapidated and dangerous condition. On a subsequent meeting, it having been proposed that a piece of ground near the Commons would be an eligible site for a new chapel, we accompanied the committee of the chapel to the spot, and the same having been approved, we recommend that the said piece of ground be let to the congregation for the purpose of building a chapel, at £5 a year while it is continued for that purpose, and we further recommend that a donation of £200 be granted to them towards the same end, this sum to be paid when the said building shall be roofed in." (*Irish Society's Deputation Report, 1832.*)

This Terrace Row site and generous financial aid promised by the Deputation of

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the Society in 1832 was probably not confirmed by the Court in London for some time after. A lease had to be prepared, with conditions attached, before the congregation could take possession of the site. At any rate the church was not finished and ready for the people to move into until 1834. It must have been thoroughly well and substantially built, for it has stood the test of time. The side walls of the present church, up to the transepts, and a large part of the roof, are the same that were then erected.

III

KILLOWEN

I may diverge here for a little to record the effort that was soon made to establish a new congregation in Killowen. This effort was led by Dr. Brown, of Aghadowey. It was not proposed to return to the old deserted church, but to seek a new site from the Clothworkers Company. This, after much negotiation, was obtained at the top of Captain Street, on the right.

I am here tempted to transcribe some interesting information on this subject from the fine historic record prepared by Mr. M. Given.

“After the removal of the old Secession congregation at Waterside to their new place of worship at Terrace Row, Killowen was formed into a Mission Station, under the care of Mr. Rogers, of Comber. In the year 1840, Dr. Brown, of Aghadowey, determined to make an effort to organise the people and

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assist them in forming a new congregation. Accordingly he called several meetings of those attending the Mission services, got a committee of seven persons appointed, visited, personally, all the Presbyterian families in the parish not connected with any other congregation, and requested them to become members of the new congregation. A considerable number of names were obtained, sufficient, he thought, to warrant him in proceeding with the project. The next step was to collect funds for the erection of a suitable building. Dr. Brown and Dr. Huston, of Macosquin, collected £50, and the members of committee about £30, in a short time. In 1841 Dr. Brown and two members of committee formed a deputation and waited upon the Clothworkers Company, soliciting their assistance. A free site for the proposed church was granted, and aid promised for its erection in proportion to the amount contributed by the people of Coleraine.

Rev. John Turbitt.

“During the same year (1841) the Rev. John Turbitt was invited to become first minister, and consented. Dr. Brown and Mr. Turbitt thereupon proceeded to

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London and gave a full account of the progress that had been made and of their financial condition, and requested the Clothworkers Company to grant an annual endowment towards the support of the minister. The Company consented to give a sum of £20 per annum to the minister, in addition to the site and subscription to the building fund already promised. An eligible site for the new church was found and handed over to the committee, and the foundation-stone was laid with due formality. On the 15th of February, 1842, the Rev. John Turbitt was installed by the Coleraine Presbytery as minister of Killowen congregation. The stipend promised was, probably, £20 per annum, the same as was promised to his successor.

“During the year 1842 the building of the new church was begun and carried on until the walls were about six or eight feet in height, when it was found that the cost already incurred was fully £80, which was the total funds in the hands of the treasurer. The work had to be stopped until additional subscriptions would be raised, but, for some unknown reason, no effort was made to raise the money required to complete the building, which remained in the condition above des-

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cribed until 1846. Mr. Turbitt and his small congregation were all poor men, and none of them seemed to have the heart or energy needed to carry to completion the work which had been so well begun. During the year 1843 Mr. Turbitt urged the people again and again to take steps to finish the new church, but all to no purpose. Their apathy and neglect, under reproof, turned to hostility and opposition, and Mr. Turbitt, discouraged and hopeless, resigned his charge early in 1844 and emigrated to America.

Rev. Arthur Fullerton.

“From this time till 1846 there was no settled minister in Killowen. On November 22nd, 1845, a call from the congregation was forwarded to the Coleraine Presbytery in favour of the Rev. Arthur Fullerton, promising to pay him £20 per annum stipend, and it was hoped that the Clothworkers’ grant of £20 would be continued, notwithstanding the unfortunate condition of congregational affairs. Mr. Fullerton accepted the call, and was installed in the pastoral charge on 24th February, 1846. Efforts were again made to get the Clothworkers to renew their annual grant of £20 ; but when they found that

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since 1842 no effort had been made to complete the church buildings, they not only refused the grant, but ordered their agent to take possession of the site and remove from it the unfinished walls of the structure, which was accordingly done. Thus this people, by their neglect and folly, lost all the fruits of Dr. Brown's labours on their behalf, and allowed the free site to be lost and the promised aid of the Clothworkers Company to lapse.

"Mr. Fullerton laboured on in this hopeless field, receiving no stipend and little sympathy, until 1849, when, on the 28th of October, he resigned the pastoral charge of Killowen congregation for the following reasons :—(1) Because there was no prospect of a house of worship ; (2) because he was not receiving any remuneration."

Thus, according to the official records, the congregation of Killowen was regularly constituted on the 15th February, 1842, when the Rev. John Turbitt was installed, and ceased to be a recognised congregation on the 20th October, 1849, when the Rev. Arthur Fullerton resigned, having existed for a period of seven or eight years. It should be said that the population of the parish was falling all this time, and has been falling

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ever since. Between 1835 and 1901 there was a decrease in population of 813, the larger part of these being Presbyterians.

From this time, for 20 years, nothing was done for Killowen Presbyterians, many of whom lapsed out of all church connection. Yet the needs of the district were felt to be real and urgent, so much so that, on 5th June, 1869, the committee of the Bible and Colportage Society issued an appeal to the public in the pages of the *Coleraine Chronicle*, asking for subscriptions to build a Mission Hall in Killowen, the estimated cost of which was £200, and stating that 80 families, or about 300 individuals, in the parish of Killowen, professing to be Protestants, did not attend any place of worship. This appeal was signed by Wm. Cavin, M.D., President ; John Huey, Treasurer ; and Thomas Nevin, Secretary. The response to this appeal was prompt and liberal, as the committee in charge was able at once to enter into a contract with Messrs. James McMullan and Alex. Higgins, builders, for the erection of the present Mission Hall. It was soon finished and paid for, and a good volunteer work, especially amongst the young, was at once begun in it, and has been carried on with varying success ever since.

IV

END OF MR. HUNTER'S MINISTRY

From this digression, which I believe will interest many readers, I now return to my proper subject—the history of the Secession congregation, just settled in their new church at Terrace Row. From 1834, when the move was made from Waterside to Terrace Row, not much is known for a few years of the life and work of the congregation. Mr. Hunter's earnest and successful ministry lasted for six years longer, till early in 1840, when he retired from active duty, having faithfully served the congregation and the cause of evangelical religion in the town and neighbourhood for forty-five years.

It should be noted here that, toward the end of Mr. Hunter's ministry, as I learn from an old copy of the *Derry Standard* bearing date February 27th, 1839, the congregation presented to Mr. Hunter a Complimentary Address, and with it, a gig and two books—Williams' "Missionary Researches" and

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Dick's "Celestial Scenery." The address was signed, on behalf of the congregation, by Robert Thompson, William Irwin, and Henry Patterson. Mr. Hunter's reply was couched in affectionate terms.

Two years after this happy meeting Mr. Hunter died. This closed the first pastorate, —one which made and left behind it a deep impression ; which gave a distinctive religious character and influence to this congregation ; the good fruits of which, I have no doubt, we are still reaping.

I am highly favoured in having the following account of Mr. Hunter's character, life, and preaching from a thoroughly reliable source. I had already learnt most of what is here stated about Mr. Hunter from his daughters, and from some of the older members of the congregation who had had the great privilege of sitting under him, both at Waterside and Terrace Row. But the following statement is not from a member of his congregation, or from one so related to him as to be biased in his favour. I give it as I received it.

Mr. Hunter's Character.

"Mr. Hunter was a man for the time—real, original, blunt, and intensely pious.

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He feared nobody and nothing. He was a short, sharp, incisive style of man, able for any amount of work, and moved by a zeal that never flagged. . . .

“Humility, running perhaps sometimes to extremes, was the basis of his character. . . .

“His preaching was practical, awakening, earnest, and very full of the motives of the Gospel. There was great emotion in it, and flashes of feeling, quick and sharp as lightning.

“The first time I heard him preach was on the evening of a Sacramental Sabbath, a few miles from Coleraine. The day was calm, the church full as it could be, and the preacher was up to the mark. He was aged then, and far past his prime, but he set forth Christ in such a way, and urged the overtures of redeeming grace with so many tears and marvellous anecdotes, that the congregation wept, and he wept; and after the sweep of nearly forty years, it lingers in my memory still as the most solemn scene of my official life. . . .

“Never did simplicity of character and singleness of aim shine with more conspicuous lustre than in him. In consequence, I am bound to declare that of all the men I ever

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knew he was the most blessed in converting souls. His congregation, when I first knew it, was full of pious men. Its elders were godly,—many of the people distinguishedly so ; but the individuals that impressed me most were the poor. . . .

“It seemed to me as if Mr. Hunter’s ministry had wrought miracles of grace among the poor. He laboured for them ; he won them in large numbers one by one to Christ ; he impressed his own type of piety, simplicity, and spiritual-mindedness on each of them, and every one of them looked up to him as an oracle. He had rich men in his flock that were pious, but the flower of it were the godly poor. At the poor man’s fireside he was seen in his glory.

“If there was one outstanding feature of his piety, more than another, it was prayerfulness. I heard him say that in the latter part of his life he spent between two and three hours every morning in prayer and reading his Bible—that he rose early to be alone. . . .

“His early life was a wrestle with convictions of sin of the acutest and most protracted kind. In the vigour of his

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manhood and ministry he had to wrestle with many a foe, the power and bitterness of whom only a spiritual pastor can feel ; and at the close of his career it was through wrestling that he made his way to the feet of the King of Paradise."

I am happy to be able to state that this fine appreciation is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Magill, of Cork, Mr. Hunter's immediate successor in Terrace Row. But it was not written until 1875, after Dr. Magill had been almost ten years in Cork, and so was in a position to compare Mr. Hunter's character and work with those of others he met later. All who knew Dr. Magill will admit that, in such matters, he was not only a discerning and capable critic, with the highest ministerial standards ever before him, but one who was inclined to be a severely faithful critic. So that his testimony regarding Mr. Hunter should be carefully pondered and never forgotten by the people of Terrace Row, for it proves what a splendid start the congregation got through Mr. Hunter's godly and single-minded ministry, and how deep and strong were the foundations laid by him in morals and religion, by his clear, practical, biblical teaching, and by his close pastoral oversight of

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the individual members of his charge. It is clear that Mr. Hunter was no ordinary man, and that the congregation among which he lived and laboured so long enjoyed no ordinary privilege. I very much regret that I have been unable to find and reproduce here a likeness of Mr. Hunter.

V

SECOND MINISTER: REV. WM. MAGILL

On 25th August, 1840, the Coleraine Presbytery installed the Rev. Wm. Magill, of 2nd Dunboe, as assistant and successor to the Rev. James Hunter.

Mr. Magill's ministry in Terrace Row was comparatively short, but it was attractive, effective, and memorable. He was still much talked of by the older people when I came to Coleraine, in 1871, almost 30 years after he had left. His preaching was specially remembered. He had a certain intense earnestness, a clear and emphatic note in his Scripture expositions, and a sharp and effective way of searching the conscience and stirring the heart in his closing appeals. He spent a whole winter lecturing on the Book of Revelations, every Sabbath evening, to a crowded house, the interest increasing as he went on. He was a remarkable man in every way. He was always and everywhere "The Minister." He shunned social



REV. WILLIAM MAGILL
1840 - 1846

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gatherings. Even with brother ministers he had little in common, and held little intercourse. He lived by himself, apart, and seemed to think only of his ministerial work. He seemed to be wanting a little in what we call "humanity." He was sharp, strict, severe in his religion. He was like Mr. Hunter in many ways, but very unlike his successor, Mr. McDonnell. Like Mr. Hunter he had a great aptitude for personal dealing. A worthy elder told me—and this happened with himself when a young man—that, coming along the road one day with a horse and cart, Mr. Magill suddenly joined him, talked for a little on ordinary topics, then put a heart-searching question as to his personal religion, and as suddenly left him to think about it. This method of dealing with individuals, my friend told me, he believed, often resulted in good. With all Mr. Magill's single-minded goodness and devotion to duty, I gathered that his temper was rather short, that he was abrupt and hasty in speech, and could not brook opposition.

Even in his visitation in the homes of the people he seemed to be almost impatiently bent on his Master's business. Neglect of his announcements, or interference with his

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plans, he could not tolerate. He seemed to expect everyone to be as earnest and attentive to duty as himself. He had lofty ideals, both as a pastor and preacher, and he tried hard to reach and realise them. He seemed, indeed, to think of nothing else and to have no other object in life. The natural result of such a six years' ministry would be an added stimulus to serious thought, a quickened interest in religious questions, and a new impulse given to the spiritual life of the congregation.

From some of the answers given at the visitation of the congregation by the Presbytery, 13th May, 1845, I note the following facts:—*By Mr. Magill*—"There are 11 elders, all observe family worship twice a day, they help in prayer meetings and Sabbath-schools—three regular prayer meetings besides the one in church,—they regularly visit the sick. There are 210 families connected with the congregation, and usually about 300 present at the Lord's Supper. £33 given last year to Missions; £50 per annum paid to minister." Finding: "The Presbytery gave unanimous expression to their high satisfaction with the ministerial fidelity of Mr. Magill and with the state of the congregation."

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After six years of unsparing and successful ministerial service in Terrace Row, Mr. Magill received a call on 24th November, 1846, to Trinity Church, Cork, which he accepted. Here he had a long and distinguished ministry in an atmosphere and amongst a people probably better suited to his peculiar talents and temperament. His success in Cork, as pastor and preacher, was recognised and rewarded by our Church authorities in conferring upon him the honorary degree of D.D. In 1874 he was unanimously called to the Moderator's Chair of the General Assembly. When he retired from active duty he came to reside in Belfast, where, in honoured old age, he died in 1892.

VI

THIRD MINISTER :

REV. JOSEPH McDONNELL

At a meeting of the Coleraine Presbytery, on February 2nd, 1847: "The committee in charge of Terrace Row reports that they had moderated a call to Mr. Joseph McDonnell, a licentiate of the Belfast Presbytery, and found the people unanimous in their choice." Mr. McDonnell accepted the call, and was ordained on 15th June, 1847, and so he became the third minister of this united and prosperous congregation.

The first thing that strikes one here is the wonderful contrast between Mr. Magill and Mr. McDonnell. Physically they were about equal in stature, and probably nearly equal in scholarship and mental equipment generally; but Mr. Magill was thin, light, wiry, agile. His spare appearance suggested, if not "fasting and penance," at least one who denied himself and "crucified the flesh." Mr.



REV. JOSEPH McDONNELL
1847 - 1870

TERRACE ROW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

McDonnell, on the other hand, was broad, strong, heavily built and slow of movement, like one who could enjoy the good things of life.

Socially, the contrast was greater still. The one, as we have seen, was retired, aloof, lived apart, had few friends, and seemingly little desire or capacity for friendship. The other was genial, urbane, warm-hearted, open to every advance, the friend and adviser of all whom he could help. In worldly matters, as well as spiritual, he was a wise counsellor. He loved society and was, as I have often heard, the best of company at a dinner table.

In the pulpit, too, these two men presented a striking contrast, though each in his way was excellent. Mr. Magill was nervously intense, always seemingly wound up to his best, ever striving so to present and enforce the truth as to get spiritual fruit. He was eager for results and bent all his powers to this single end. Mr. McDonnell, with perhaps a broader mind and more human sympathy, calmly expounded and applied the truth to suit all classes, and this with such force, conviction, and affection as to be at once impressive and edifying. Mr. McDonnell was at his best, I understand,

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at a Communion Service. The pathetic in it specially appealed to his nature, and I have heard that both he and his hearers were often moved to tears as he discoursed on the solemn and momentous facts and truths set forth in symbol at the Holy Table.

But I must keep in view the congregation, its character and growth. For evidence of this I must turn to authoritative documents. This evidence I find in the minutes of Presbytery, and here, from the records of several Visitations held during Mr. McDonnell's time, I glean the following facts :—

In April 1850, three years after Mr. McDonnell's ordination, it is recorded that the congregation consisted of 200 families and that the stipend paid was £50. Two years later, in 1852, I find it recorded that the number of families was 212 and the stipend £55, a slight increase in both. In 1854, two years later, the number of families had increased to 227, but the stipend had gone back to £50.

Visitation of 1856.

In 1856 there was a Presbytery Visitation of Terrace Row congregation. In the minute of this visitation many items of interest are

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recorded. I can only give a few of them. There were present 14 ministers and 10 elders. The elders appointed to represent the session were Messrs. Robert Nevin and Wm. Irwin; and to represent the congregation Messrs. James Thompson and Wm. Morrow. From the many answers given I select the following:—

The elders answer—"Mr. McDonnell takes a special interest in the education of the young, superintending the Sabbath-school held in the meeting-house, consisting of 270 scholars. There are other Sabbath-schools conducted by members of the congregation."

Mr. McDonnell answers—"There are 11 elders now, four have died recently. Every elder but one has charge of a prayer meeting, some more than one. There are 12 prayer meetings within the bounds of the congregation."

Answers by minister and elders jointly—"There are 225 families connected with the congregation; all but six contribute less or more to the support of the place. They attend well upon public worship, usually about 500, sometimes nearly 700; about 120 observe family worship twice a day, and 17

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on the Sabbath only. Average number at the Lord's Table about 300; number of communicants for the first time, from 8 to 12 on each occasion. Cannot say the people do contribute for the support of Missions in proportion to their means, but comparatively they are liberal. As to the state of religion, cannot say much as to real godliness, but there is increased attention to forms and ordinances, and family worship is maintained in many homes where it had been neglected."

The committee answer—"The annual stipend has been £50, but it is intended to increase it to £65. The ordinary Sabbath collection is from 10s. to 12s. A sum of about £25 annually is contributed to all the Missions of the Assembly."

After consultation in private the finding of the Presbytery was announced as follows:—

"That this Presbytery record their high appreciation of the ministerial faithfulness and efficiency of Mr. McDonnell, the diligence of the eldership in promoting Sabbath-school instruction, maintaining prayer meetings, and encouraging missionary contributions. They congratulate pastor and people on the

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healthy and prosperous state of the congregation."

From these direct answers to vital questions as to the life and work of the congregation, we get more reliable testimony as to the real condition of the congregation than could be derived from any general statement or from mere hearsay evidence.

Visitation of 1859.

The next Presbytery record of the growth of the congregation is that of 1859. Here it is stated that the number of families was then 226 and the stipend £75—not £65, as promised at the earlier Visitation. It may be interesting to note that at this time the number of families in First Coleraine was 220 and the stipend £115; while in New Row the families were 306 and the stipend £120.

It will be interesting, at this point, to reproduce the outlines of the Annual Report of the congregation for 1861. This Report shows some of the results of the 1859 Revival.

TERRACE ROW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REPORT FOR 1861.

Pastor :

REV. JOSEPH MACDONNELL.

Members of Session :

NEILL CURRY.
WILLIAM IRWIN.
ROBERT NEVIN.
JAMES LAUGHLIN.
WILLIAM NEVIN.
JOHN JOHNSTON.
WM. SIMPSON.

THOMAS WARNOCK.
THOMPSON M'AFEE.
JAMES PORTER.
JAMES THOMPSON.
SAMUEL MORROW.
JOHN MILLAR.
THOMAS NEVIN.

JAMES BLACK.

Clerk of Session : WILLIAM IRWIN.

Committee :

ROBERT NEVIN.
JAMES THOMPSON.
JAMES GILMOUR.
JAMES ROBINSON.
WM. HANSON.
JAMES M'CURDY.
SAMUEL WALLACE.
JOHN FISHER.
THOMAS GLENN.
WM. MORROW.
WM. FORBES.
SAML. HOUSTON.
JOHN DOHERTY.
WM. CURRY.
WM. NEVIN.
JAMES NEVIN.

HUGH MACDONNELL.
J. H. CARLTON.
ALEX. IRWIN.
JOHN MAIRS.
WM. MOORE.
HENRY LESLIE.
WM. STEWART.
JOS. WARNOCK.
AARON ANDERSON.
JOHN M'GOWAN.
SAMUEL HENRY.
ARCHD. IRWIN.
DAVID BLACK.
JAMES KEITH.
WM. TAYLOR.
ABEL AICKEN.

JOSEPH BASSETT.

Treasurer : ROBERT NEVIN.

Secretary : JAMES THOMPSON.

TERRACE ROW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REPORT.

THE Committee of this (Terrace Row Presbyterian) Congregation cannot issue this report to the members of the Congregation, and the courts of the Church, without something more than a dry detail of names, dates, and figures. They feel bound in duty to express their thankfulness to the King and Head of the Church for the remarkable prosperity which has steadily attended the Congregation during the last twelve or fifteen years, the families having in that time increased from 180 to 253—the present number. This increase rendered it indispensably necessary, in the year 1860, to enlarge the House of Worship ; and accordingly it was enlarged, so as to afford accommodation for 200 additional sitters. In order to meet the expenses necessary to effect this enlargement, a subscription list was opened in May, 1860. The minister and members of the Congregation subscribed liberally, and paid punctually and almost universally the sums respectively attached to their names, as may be seen in the columns of the Statement. Indeed the Committee feel constrained to express their great gratification at witnessing the generosity of the people on that occasion. Nor can they overlook the kind and cordial aid rendered them, in the time of their difficulty, by the Christian public of all denominations.

Looking at the healthy, prosperous, and harmonious state of the Congregation, having a Session consisting of 15 members and the Moderator ; a Committee of 36 ; a Sabbath School of 243 children, 30 teachers, and Superintendent ; and roll of 253 families connected with our Church, your Committee would “thank God and take courage,” cherishing the hope that the outward is but the index of an inward and spiritual prosperity, and that the additions are of such as shall be saved.

TERRACE ROW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN ACCOUNT WITH ROBERT NEVIN, TREASURER.				Cr.		
Dr.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1860.						
Dec. 10.	To Collection for Foreign Mission	10	1	6		
1861.						
Jan. 28.	Home Mission	...	9	0	0	
April 2.	Jewish Mission	...	9	15	0	
May 31.	Colonial and Continental do.	...	9	4	0	
July 1.	Assistant Ministers' Fund	...	3	11	0	
Oct. 10.	Roman Catholic do.	...	10	0	6	
	Amount Stipend collected during the year	...	114	17	0	
	Amount of Sabbath Collections	...	39	18	1½	
	United Evening Service do.	...	3	1	11	
April —.	Communion Sabbath	...	4	0	4½	
Oct. —.	Do. do.	...	4	19	6	
						218 8 11

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Visitation of 1867.

Six years later, in 1867, I find this record: Families 275, and stipend £110—now seemingly the largest membership, but still much the smallest stipend in town. At the Visitation by the Presbytery on May 7th of this year, held in Terrace Row Church, 14 ministers and 7 elders were present. Rev. R. W. Fleming, Moderator; and Rev. J. B. Rentoul, Clerk.

Messrs. Wm. Irwin and R. Nevin represented the session, and Messrs. S. Henry and T. Nevin the committee.

Mr. McDonnell reported that they had 13 elders, that they co-operated most zealously in the work of the congregation, and took a deep interest in the education of the young.

The session reported there are 700 sittings in church; average attendance 500 to 550, present at communion 350.

Committee answer—"Annual income of the congregation from all sources £272. The amount of seat rents £118. Stipend promised £50—paid for the last two years £210."

The Presbytery retired and came to the following finding: "The Presbytery desire to record their sincere gratification with the proceedings of the visitation, with the very marked success which has attended the

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ministry of Mr. McDonnell, with the energy and zeal of the members of session in the various departments of their duty, and the admirable working order maintained by the committee of the congregation."

The above figures given by the session should be read in light of the enlargement of the church and the increase of communicants following the '59 revival.

This is the last reference I find in the minutes of Presbytery to the state of the congregation during Mr. McDonnell's time. He met with a serious accident in a railway train soon after this and was disabled for public duty afterwards. He was still living and present in the congregation the first time I preached on trial in Terrace Row. I remember that he sat in Mr. Laughlin's pew, just beside the pulpit, and I was told by Mr. Laughlin that he said at the close of the service, "That's your man." He was dead before I returned for second hearing towards the end of 1870.

A Presbytery minute on 22nd November, 1870, moved by Mr. Oliver and seconded by Mr. Martin, reads as follows :—

"That this Presbytery, lamenting the death of the Rev. Joseph McDonnell, late minister of Terrace Row, desire to express

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their deep sense of the loss they have sustained by the removal of one who was a kind and obliging friend, a talented and judicious member of Presbytery, ever aiding with great clearness and strength of mind in all their deliberations, and a laborious, zealous, and efficient pastor."

Mr. McDonnell thus served the congregation for 23 years; not in the pulpit only, for he was the warm friend and wise adviser of every family under his care, and, indeed, of many others outside. Judging from the minutes, he was a prominent figure in the Presbytery, and took a leading part in all its business. I notice that when any trouble, in the way of disputes or difficulties, arose in any of its congregations, the Presbytery generally appointed and requested Mr. McDonnell to visit that congregation and try to smooth away differences and effect reconciliation and peace. He always went, and, I believe, always succeeded. On such a mission he was a master. He knew human nature well, on all its sides, and, by his rare wisdom and tact and persuasiveness, could work wonders in dealing with contentious men and women.

I understand that Mr. McDonnell took a very active part in the great revival of '59,

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the fruits of which were soon manifest in the increased membership of his congregation. The church became too small for the growing numbers and was accordingly enlarged, by a simple extension backwards, so as to add 200 sittings. Thus sitting accommodation for 500 was increased to 700.

From all we now know we must conclude that the outstanding character of the congregation for personal piety and earnest Christian work, so successfully established by Mr. Hunter and fostered by Mr. Magill, was sustained and strengthened under Mr. McDonnell.

VII

FOURTH MINISTER : REV. R. B. WYLIE

I now come to that part of the history of the congregation which concerns me most, and with which I am most familiar ; indeed, what follows must be very much an autobiography. If, therefore, the “I” becomes prominent in my story, I hope it will be excused as simply unavoidable.

My Call.

It may interest some if I go back a little and state some circumstances connected with my call to Terrace Row. I may say that I received three calls—one to 1st Ramelton, one to Castlereagh, and one to Terrace Row—all at the same meeting of the Belfast Presbytery, under whose care I was as a student and licentiate. At that meeting my choice or decision had to be made. I had thought most carefully and prayerfully over the relative claims of the three calls, and considered specially which would suit best my

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inexperience. I went to the Presbytery that morning at Belmont, feeling satisfied that Castlereagh would suit me best. So, too, my many friends advised. It was just outside Belfast, yet entirely in the country. One service in the week was all that would be expected until I gained some experience. They had called me most heartily and unanimously after one hearing. So I left my friends that morning quite expecting that I would accept the call to Castlereagh. But in the Presbytery all was changed. The deputies from both congregations were heard at length (Ramelton did not send representatives), and as the elders from Coleraine, Mr. T. Warnock and Mr. T. Nevin, spoke, I felt a strange drawing and yielding to them. I could not resist. I felt it would be resisting the Spirit; so I at once, and at all hazard, accepted the call to Terrace Row. When this was over, I remember Rev. J. Macnaughten, of Rosemary Street, expressed regret that all the elders in the Belfast Presbytery had not been present to hear the addresses of the Coleraine elders.

Ordination.

From that day forward I had an anxious time. I preached once more in Terrace Row



REV. R. B. WYLIE
AT BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY

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during the six weeks between my acceptance of the call and my ordination. Soon the eventful and almost dreaded day arrived. Very many of my friends—ministers, both old and young—assembled with me to see me through and wish me God-speed. It was a great and trying day for me. First came the solemn ordination service, then the usual ordination dinner, with its sentiments and speeches ; then, in the evening, a crowded public reception in the Town Hall. I have never since seen the Hall look so well, or better filled with a hearty, gracious, welcoming people. Again there were many speeches,—much too flattering, of course. When I had nervously said my say I remember getting down amongst the people and being introduced to, and welcomed by, the till then unknown members of my flock. All were cordial, and hope, happiness, and goodwill seemed to glow on every countenance. My mind was now at ease, and this social side of the day's proceedings was the only part I really enjoyed. At last the long day was over, and I went to rest deeply conscious that I was actually the minister of Terrace Row congregation.

A few extracts from the full report given in the *Chronicle* of the ordination day's

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proceedings, introduced here, may serve to show something of the standing and character of the congregation at this time.

“The importance of a settlement in a congregation of considerable local celebrity was generally recognised, and the acknowledged ability of the minister elect was so highly appreciated, that it was not surprising to find the spacious church crowded with a most attentive congregation.

“Upon the platform, or present at subsequent portions of the proceedings, was the most comprehensive representation of the Church which we have ever seen assembled at any previous ordination. As stated by the Rev. Jonathan Simpson, there were representatives of eight Presbyteries—Route, Belfast, Limavady, Tyrone, Templepatrick, Rathfriland, Londonderry, and Coleraine.”

Passing on to the Dinner, the description given by the *Chronicle* of the Town Hall, where it was held, reveals strikingly the good taste, lively interest, and christian sentiment of the people of Terrace Row.

“The Dinner provided by the congregation for the new minister, his friends, and the Presbytery was given in the Town Hall. The decorations of the handsome room, carried out by Mr. Gilmour (landscape gardener) and

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Mr. C. M. Loughridge, aided by young lady members of the congregation, were, by far, the most tasteful which we have ever seen in the Town Hall. Surrounding, embellishing, or giving effect to mottoes, were wreaths, festoons, or draperies of foliage and flowers upon the east and west ends of the building. The mottoes were: 'Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another'; 'How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity'; 'Bear ye one another's burdens'; 'Kind hearts are more than coronets.' The tables were most tastefully ornamented and the viands excellent—the absence of intoxicants indicating the principles likely to guide the new minister of this congregation with regard to the customary use of stimulants."

Dealing with the reception in the evening, the *Chronicle* said: "This meeting, which was intended to afford the members of the congregation, and especially the younger portion, an opportunity of being introduced to their new minister, was a great success, every available spot in the Town Hall being occupied by a highly respectable assemblage. The decorations with which the walls had been adorned still graced the

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spaces and festooned the windows, the effect being enhanced by the handsome style in which the refreshment tables were laid out with fruit of various kinds, and many handsome plants in pots. The Chair was occupied by the Rev. R. W. Fleming."

After the opening exercises many speeches followed. I give a portion of my own address, taken from the *Chronicle* report, as showing the impressions I had already received of the Terrace Row people, and setting forth the true spirit and methods of work for the future.

"Rev. R. B. Wylie, who was most cordially received, said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I feel I cannot thank you sufficiently for the more than cordial welcome which you have given me this evening. Such a greeting bespeaks true sympathy. You have all heard it said that 'where there is smoke there must be fire,' and I would say that, by an equal necessity, where there is such a welcome accorded to a Christian minister, there must be warm and Christian hearts. As I look round me I feel that here I have sympathy, and, having sympathy, I have strength. Not *alone* am I to enter on the arduous duties of my office. No; I feel to-night as I think Saul must have

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felt when, having been anointed King of Israel, and about, no doubt with fear and trembling, to enter on the new and difficult duties of his kingly office, 'there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.' This was his strength in that trying time. This band of true-hearted men voluntarily gathering round him to sympathise, to counsel, to defend, must have gone far to shake off those doubts and misgivings with which he entered on the proud, but perilous, position of a nation's king. And so I, having been this morning set apart to the most important office under heaven, and feeling the all but overwhelming responsibility of my work, and my great need of both human sympathy and Divine aid, am encouraged and strengthened beyond measure by the assurance that I am not to enter on that work alone, but that there is a band of men to work with me whose hearts God has touched—men to whom I know I am already indebted for their earnest prayers and kindly deeds; men who have not only ready hands to work themselves, but Christian hearts to excuse another's failings. Such a band of men, united by a genuine sympathy, actuated by one spirit, earnestly striving for the same end, may

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accomplish almost anything. But not only must there be a genuine sympathy amongst us, there must also be one distinct and definite *end* in view if we are to work harmoniously and successfully together. Now, what is to be our aim? For what were we solemnly united this morning as pastor and people? And what, if spared, is to be the great purpose of our life together? Is it simply to build up and, if possible, extend the congregation of which we are members? Is it to rival other churches or sects in the community in which we live? Is it to improve the education, or the worldly condition, or the social standing of ourselves or our neighbours? No; none of these is to be our highest aim. Let it rather be our great, our unchanging purpose to associate together in work and prayer for the regeneration and ennobling of men's souls; for the propagation of that light and life-giving truth committed to us by our Lord; for the repression of sin and vice in every form; for the entire abolition of those evil customs which blight society, desolate families, and ruin souls. In all our efforts let this be our constant aim—none lower is worthy of our Master, or has the promise of His blessing. But there is another element which

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is essential to success in such work as ours ; namely, *unanimity* as to the means by which we seek the end. We must be united as to the plan by which we are to work. If one is to try one method, and another another, and each persists in maintaining that his way is best, nothing can be done. However united we may be in sympathy and in aim, if we differ as to the means by which we are to work, we shall be all but powerless. We shall be like boatmen toiling on a storm-tossed sea, differing as to the best and safest course by which to gain the harbour, plunging and pulling in opposite directions, thus wasting their energies, preventing their progress, and endangering the safety of the entire crew. Let them but agree as to the course they are to take, let them be guided by the pilot at the helm, let them strike together as with one will, and soon the same effort will carry them in safety to the desired haven. Let us, then, be one in sympathy and in aim, let us agree as to the means by which we are to work, let us feel for, bear with, and assist each other ; and, above all, let us seek God's blessing on our unwearying efforts, and prosperity and success are sure."

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First Sabbath.

The first Sabbath after my ordination was what they then called "Preparation Sabbath." My dear old friend, Professor Wallace, came down all the way from Belfast to "preach me in," or to give me a "send off." The church was crowded, and while he preached and spoke of me as a student, and of his hopes of me as a minister, and warmly commended me to the sympathy and care of the congregation, and then spoke to me of the responsibilities and duties of the office and work I had entered upon, I sat trembling in a pew, more touched than I care to say. When the sermon was over I was called upon to baptise no fewer than five children. I had never done this before, and, indeed, had seldom seen it done, and in my then excited state of mind, after listening to Prof. Wallace, with a great congregation waiting anxiously to see how their young minister would acquit himself on such an occasion, I hardly know how I got through. But I did somehow, without a hitch or a serious mistake.

First Communion.

The following Sabbath was Communion, which meant much to both minister and

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people, with its many extra services and Sessional duties. The previous Thursday was "Fast Day," which was then observed as the Sabbath, all shops being closed and farm work abandoned. The Session met at 11 o'clock for dealing with the young people wishing to join the Church for the first time. This over, half an hour was given to prayer,—the special subjects, and the member to lead in each, having been arranged beforehand. Cases of discipline had been dealt with a fortnight earlier. Public worship was at 12 o'clock. At the close of this service tokens were distributed by the minister, the elders standing by as the people filed past. There was generally a full attendance of the members on the "Fast Day."

On Saturday there was a public service at 1 o'clock, to suit those who had business to do in the market. The service on Sabbath began at 11 o'clock, and usually lasted till nearly 5 o'clock. After a full service there were four or five tables to serve, the people sitting in the aisles, a separate address being given to each table. All this over, slowly and solemnly the minister then went to the pulpit and gave a closing exhortation to all the communicants. The people did not, then, seem to think this too long.

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On Monday at 12 o'clock there was another public service. This one generally was not so well attended, and had, I thought, rather a chilling effect after the warmth experienced on the previous day. Looking back I still wonder how I got through the ordeal of such a series of meetings. Everything was new to me. At first I had a special minister to help at the week-day services, and, for the prolonged Sabbath service, I took the precaution of having, at that first Communion, my old and revered friend, the Rev. Joseph Barkley, of Carnmoney, with me, to do the work of which I had absolutely no experience—the addressing of the tables. I preached the "Action" sermon, then he followed, taking the tables and the closing exhortation. It seemed to the people a happy, rich, and satisfying Communion.

First Year's Experience.

I feel I must digress here for a little to say how foolish, almost cruel, I think it is, to set a young man, without any experience of congregational life and work, over a large congregation accustomed to the ministrations and guidance of wise and experienced men, and expect him at once to take full charge of every department of the work of

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the congregation. I think I may venture to make a confession here. No one will ever know, and few could imagine, what my first year in the ministry cost me. The constant strain, the mental agony at times, the crushing feeling of responsibility, the fear of failure, the sense of utter unfitness for the work, the horrid dread, as soon as one service was over, that I might be unable to prepare for the next, the anxious hours and often bitter tears in private—all this, and far more that I cannot describe, so weighed upon me and wore me down physically that my old friends, at my first Assembly, hardly recognised me. They looked at me in wonder and asked me what was wrong. Slowly I gathered a measure of confidence and of facility in my work, though the deep and almost burdening sense of responsibility, especially for my pulpit work, never left me. Perhaps it was better so, but it was a painful experience. So far as I can gather, other young ministers do not suffer to the same extent, but I was naturally of a most nervous, excitable, anxious temperament, and had absolutely no previous experience of either speaking or praying in public; hence the price I had to pay. None of those about me, even the members with whom I

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was most intimate, ever suspected in the least what I was passing through; for outwardly in society I managed to keep bright, and, when in the pulpit, I was told that I seemed brave and strong and confident. How little people in the pews know or think at what cost they are being fed!

But enough of myself. This is now an old story, though, to me, one never to be forgotten.

VIII

NEW BUILDINGS AND NEEDFUL IMPROVEMENTS

I now turn to some of our church improvements and building projects.

Church Property.

When I came to Terrace Row the church property consisted entirely of a very plain, oblong church, too long for the width of it (the gallery fronts coming close up to and overlooking the pulpit), with a little lay-to session-room and vestry between the back end of the church and the foundry wall; a side door opened into the church at the end of the top cross aisle. This completed the material possessions of the congregation at this time. I at once set to work to improve matters, and, I may say, never stopped, save for a few short intervals, till the year before I retired from active duty. And here I ought

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also to say that, from the first movement to the last, I was heartily and generously backed up and supported by an absolutely united and loyal congregation. As I look back and remember the history and circumstances of the people, I cannot but wonder at and admire the patience and courage, the generosity and whole-hearted devotion with which, through the long years, they carried on, and carried out, such a succession of costly additions and improvements.

First of all I found the church pews were very uncomfortable and most unsightly, with very high, straight-up backs, and level seats, forming a right angle, and many of them painted in different colours. Only the heads of the older people were visible from the pulpit, while the children were lost—they could not see the minister, nor he them. So, without hesitation, it was agreed in my first year to cut down and lean back the pews, giving the front edge of the seats a little tilt upwards, and then paint and grain the whole, upstairs and down, uniformly. This work was undertaken and carried out admirably by one of the elders, Mr. Wm. Moore, at a cost of about £150. All were pleased, and enjoyed the added comfort and decency of this first modest venture.

The Manse.

Early in the following year, 1872, the erection of a manse was taken in hand. Mr. Hunter had lived in a snug cottage at Drumslade, Mr. Magill in lodgings in town, and Mr. McDonnell in a farm-house, with farm attached which he was able to work to advantage ; so, hitherto, there had been no provision of a manse. And as the congregation seemingly did not wish me to live and die a bachelor, like Mr. McDonnell, nor yet to become a farmer, they quite readily and seemingly gladly undertook the serious responsibility of building a manse. I was asked to select the site and to consider, with an architect, the plans. The site I selected I thought, and still think, the finest in the district, but, until motor-cars arrived, rather far from the church. This I found afterwards when meetings greatly multiplied in town.

The cost of the manse, it was thought beforehand, ought to be about £800, but, alas, before it was finished the cost had risen to almost double that sum—close on £1,500. This covered the cost of site and surrounding walls, the building up of the front terrace, with the avenue and entrance

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gate, as well as the main building and offices, making a very complete and beautiful home, with the name, "Edenmore Manse," cut in a circular stone high up in front. My only regret was the *cost*; and, when all was finished, I could not but feel that less might have done. I felt this the more as I had been given a free hand in everything connected with it; and, though I was a bit of an architect on paper, I had no experience in actual house-building; but I had then, and still have, the feeling that it is better to do things right at first than be sorry afterwards that you did not.

No doubt the cost was very heavy for such a congregation, and one that had no previous experience in raising large sums. By the time the manse was finished the congregational effort had reached about £500. After deliberation it was agreed to borrow £500 from the Board of Works, to be repaid in 12 years at the rate of $10\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.—£51 17s. 2d. a year. Most of £500 had to be borrowed from local sources. This meant heavy annual payments of interest; and to meet this, it was moved, and unanimously agreed, at a full meeting of session and committee that all the pew rents be doubled. Strange to say this change was

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effected and carried through without dissent or friction of any kind.

Evening Sabbath-school.

Meantime there was a marked revival of congregational life and interest. Workers could be more easily found, both for district visiting and Sabbath-school teaching. In my second year, finding that a considerable number of the children of our members were going to the afternoon Sabbath-schools of other denominations in the town, I felt it my duty to start an afternoon Sabbath-school of our own. There was no place to meet other than the galleries of the old church. The morning school met on the floor of the church, and we, for some reason, were sent to the gallery. A fine staff of teachers was secured without much trouble, and soon the number of scholars rose to 200, and as high as 230 at times. These were not all our own children. The afternoon school was to be in part a mission school. So the untaught and uncared-for children of non-churchgoers in the neighbourhood were sought for and gathered in. I superintended this school myself for some time, and greatly enjoyed seeing the zeal and success with which it was carried on.

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It was a new departure, and it has gone on, not quite on the same lines, ever since. We soon found ourselves painfully hampered and handicapped for want of suitable accommodation for our Sabbath-schools and week-evening meetings of various kinds.

School Buildings.

So another building project began, and was so warmly and widely discussed that everyone got to see and feel that school buildings must be provided if the increasing work and social life of the congregation were to be successfully carried on. When I thought the psychological moment had come for making a practical move forward, I preached a pointed and urgent sermon on the subject, showing the clamant need, for the sake of our young people, of suitable school-rooms and lecture-hall accommodation. I tried to stimulate the faint-hearted and doubting ones, who seemed to remember only that we were already under a heavy load of debt, by discoursing on the text, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish : so that we are not able to build the wall." The "wall" easily became the school-room, alongside of and strengthening the church. I fear the

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“rubbish” became, that day, the unwilling or fearful ones who obstructed or refused to help in the work. No one was offended by my great plainness of speech. I spent that evening going over the names of the substantial members of the congregation and setting a certain sum over against each name—a sum that I thought he or she might be able to give. These names and figures I copied into a little handbook, and went out next morning to test the accuracy or otherwise of my estimate. Strange to say, when I got, in the course of a few days, to the end of my list, I had received from every man and woman the exact sum which I had marked against each name before I set out. In the case of one good man, who kept a small meal and flour shop, when I called he knew at once my errand, and seemed slightly amused. I told him I had his name entered for £10. The need was great and he knew it. He smiled quizzically and said, “I suppose if I didn’t give it, you would think I was ‘rubbish,’” and then, quite pleasantly, wrote me a cheque for the amount. He evidently remembered the sermon to some purpose. I had studied and planned out the buildings required with great care, and put all on paper, to scale, exactly as they now

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stand. But to those who have not seen these buildings, I may say that they consist of a large central hall running right through, lighted from both ends, capable of seating about 400 people. Off this, on the side next the church, there is a good large session-room and vestry. On the opposite side, there is a committee or adult class-room, and a fine large infant class-room. Each of these side rooms opens into the central hall, and is also accessible from the outside by separate entrance. A movable platform and desk occupy the upper end of the hall—at the other end is a little gallery over the porch, with cloakrooms in the corners. All this, even on paper, pleased and inspired me. But *how* to get our Lecture Hall transformed from a paper plan into a real substantial structure was the problem. Money, of course, or rather the want of it, was the barrier. These buildings cost £1,350, or, with lavatories, furniture, and other costly additions later, £1,435 14s. 0d. We could only raise, with great generosity, among ourselves about £400, and were still heavily in debt for the manse. What was to be done? I was now sorry that we had not built the schools before the manse. The congregation could not really do without

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the schools, while I could have done without the manse for some years. But such regrets were useless now. There was nothing for it but courageously to tackle this costly job, and do our very best, in every possible way, to raise the necessary funds.

Our First Bazaar.

While the buildings were going up I set about organising, on a broad basis, a grand Bazaar. The following circular, designed to prepare for the effort, was issued at this time; and as it contains a concise statement of our congregational circumstances, it may be well to reproduce it here.

EDENMORE,

COLERAINE,

16th January, 1877.

.....

We purpose making an effort during the summer to provide suitable buildings for our Sabbath-schools and other meetings of various kinds in connection with our church at Terrace Row. Hitherto we have had no accommodation whatever for these purposes save the church itself. In consequence, we have been suffering great inconvenience, and have been prevented from undertaking much work in which we ought to have been, and would wish to be, engaged.

The proposed buildings—comprising a large School-room, an Infant Class-room, a Session-room, and a Vestry—are to cost, when finished and furnished,

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about £800. To meet this outlay we have raised within ourselves £350. We have a promise from the Honourable Irish Society of £150; so that we still require for this work about £300.

Our difficulty is increased by the fact that we have been for some time under a heavy congregational debt which, after repeated reductions, still amounts to £300.

In the hope of realizing a sum sufficient to complete these school buildings, and to reduce, or if possible remove, our existing debt, we have resolved to hold a Bazaar next summer, in the Town Hall, Coleraine. We feel that, in order to make this proposed Bazaar a success, we must rely largely on the sympathy and help of our friends and the Christian public, and we trust our cause and circumstances are such as will secure for us the generous consideration and cordial co-operation which at present we so much need. YOUR help will be esteemed a great favour. May we reckon upon it?

Hoping that some share of your sympathy will be accorded to us,

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

R. B. WYLIE.

This I sent far and wide to all the friends and relatives I had in the world. My good old friends in Belfast at once agreed to furnish and conduct a stall at the bazaar. The project was received with the most cordial sympathy by all the churches and denominations in Coleraine. All recognised our need and offered a helping hand. Each

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of the other Presbyterian churches in town agreed to have a separate stall. St. Patrick's very kindly undertook the responsibility and labour of running a stall. The smaller denominations united most pleasantly to furnish a stall of their own, while Terrace Row people worked so hard they required two stalls to display their goods. As the summer advanced the interest grew, and, when the appointed day in August arrived, the zeal and enthusiasm, as if for a great common cause, knew no bounds. There was an unaffected friendly warmth all round which was delightful, and behind this a spirit of competition, of keen rivalry, amongst the different stall-holders, which helped all and offended none. The Town Hall looked extravagantly rich and gay when all the stalls were set out in order, draped and furnished with their best. But the hall itself was too small to accommodate comfortably the well-wishers who assembled there that day and the next, to meet their friends and give a helping hand. I should add here that what impressed me most, and pleased me best, throughout this whole effort, was the fact that all church or denominational distinctions completely disappeared, or were melted away in the warmth of the friendly, social

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atmosphere that permeated the hall. It actually does my old heart good to remember how my young heart felt on that, to me, memorable occasion !

But, in addition to the social and friendly advantages of the bazaar, all were cheered by the financial result. It netted £640, a sum not so easy to raise in those days ; and, better than gold, it united, for the first time, hearts and hands in friendly co-operation in a good cause. It broke the ice that too long had separated man from man and church from church. It helped to thaw the manner of some who had held themselves aloof in both ecclesiastical and social life, so that, apart from money raised, the good fruits of that bazaar were quite noticeable after many years in the town and district.

Other Financial Efforts.

An application was made to the Irish Society, with an urgent appeal for help, and £150 was granted.

Special quarterly collections were now begun, and carried on yearly for the funds of the church ; and a few years later a "New Year Offering" came into existence. This offering was made for six consecutive years,

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and raised an average of over £70 a year. There were also occasional extra efforts to meet urgent needs. I notice in the 1876 accounts that, to meet treasurer's adverse balance, £87 17s. 7d. was subscribed, most of it by comparatively few—the same men giving over and over again at every call. This proves the spirit and quality of the men of the time better than any words of mine.

By the aid of some legacies and continued additional efforts, the school buildings were virtually free of debt, and the schools going strong, in 1878.

I feel that I ought to record here, as showing the spirit of the people, the fact that when, in 1874, I returned from Dublin after my LL.D. examination and degree conferred, the congregation, hard pressed as they were with debt, gave me a warm welcome, and presented me with a purse of sovereigns containing £56. I can see some of their dear faces still, as I received their congratulations accompanied with tears of joy.

While this long-continued high pressure was kept up to meet the recurring calls for manse and schools, it should be noted that the people's givings to other objects—

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Missions, Zenana, Orphanage, etc.—kept on increasing. A Dorcas Society was started, and kept going successfully for many years. This was really used as a Provident Fund to help to clothe poor children, who could not otherwise come to the Sabbath-school. Sometimes, too, older people were helped with clothing to enable them to come to church. Much practical good was done through the efforts of this benevolent society. In one year over £17 was dispensed through it. All this generous and active service still further reveals the truly Christian character of the congregation.

IX

DISTRICT VISITATION

It was the custom in the early years of my ministry to appoint an elder to go with me on my rounds of district visitation. This practice was kept up longer in the visitation of the country districts than in the town. It had some advantages and also some drawbacks. It kept you more directly to the subject-matter on hand, but it often prevented the closeness of confidence that would have been given to the minister alone.

An amusing incident occurred at one of these visitations, which is too good to omit here. The elder and I arrived one forenoon at a house far out in the country, on the edge of a bog. When we entered, a keen-eyed old man was sitting at one side of the kitchen fire. In the opposite corner, closed in by a rail, was a litter of young pigs, all white and clean, with plenty of fresh straw about them. The old man welcomed us

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cordially and said, looking at the little pigs, "Ye hae got a family in, but a doubt it's no' the yin you're lookin' for; but if ye sit doon a bit I'll ca' the others in." So we sat down, and the other family, a large one, came in, and we talked together for some time, and I noticed that, as we talked, the little pigs got up and stood quietly as if listening. But the moment we knelt in prayer the pigs started off, most of them in a circle, one or two standing in the centre, and they tore around, snorting and grunting, the straw flying over their backs, and making such a row that not a word could be heard. I had to stop and get up—the family, too, rose from their knees, and immediately the pigs stopped in their wild career and stood looking at us. But the old man, seemingly distressed, and staring angrily over at the pigs, said, "Weel, it's a lang time since th' divil entered into a herd o' swine," and, still looking reproachfully at the pigs, added, "an' ye hae affronted me this day onyway." One could not help being amused at the quickness of the old man in tracing the interruption of prayer to the devil, and his consequent anger, but the little pigs looked quite happy and unconscious of any evil intent. We had eighteen families to visit

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that day, but no other provided such entertainment for us.

About 1878 we instituted a new system of district visitation, which yielded excellent results, both to the visitors and to the visited.

I introduced the matter by preaching on the responsibility of the rank and file of church members for the care and instruction of the ignorant, careless poor, unconnected with any church, scattered about every district in town and country. Why send out missionaries, at great expense and trouble, to try to convert the heathen in India and China, and leave souls, equally precious and far more accessible, to perish uncared for at our doors? Surely these home heathen should be felt to be, and treated as, a first charge laid by the Master on the hearts and consciences of a truly Christian people.

A meeting was called of all who felt they ought to help in this good work. There was a most encouraging response, especially of young women. The mode of procedure was explained, and a fine supply of Gospel tracts was in readiness. Each country visitor was asked to concentrate her thought and care upon a small number of families, perhaps three or four, visit these regularly, leave a

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tract, cultivate friendly relations, give no charity, but aim entirely at doing them good, at arousing their interest and gaining their sympathy, and, eventually, at winning their hearts to the Lord. Wisdom and patience were called for. In town districts a larger number of families, say eight or ten, were assigned to each visitor. Soon the whole area for which the congregation was responsible was completely covered, and it was a great satisfaction to know that not a soul within our bounds was left without a warning, winsome voice, and a regular offer of the Gospel.

For a time the visitors met monthly to report, to compare notes, to get and give encouragement, to consider difficult cases and how to deal with them. Later on we met quarterly, then half-yearly. I continued for very many years the convener of this band of workers, and greatly enjoyed the meetings. Generally they were most encouraging. The workers themselves became deeply interested in the individuals and families under their care. Quite a missionary spirit was developed in the endeavour to seek and save the lost. No other part of my work gave me more real satisfaction than this.

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Later on in my ministry the number of families in the country districts became greatly reduced, and the number in town about equally increased. When I began, about two-thirds of the congregation lived in the country and one-third in the town ; towards the end, this proportion was just reversed—one-third in the country and two-thirds in the town.

X

KIRK SESSION

I feel that I ought to give here a much fuller and more detailed account of the session of the congregation as I found it, of its quality and its work.

The Terrace Row Session had long been an outstanding and determining feature in the character and work of the congregation. The following were the elders when I, timid and inexperienced, entered the session in 1871: William Irwin, Robert Nevin, James Laughlin, William Nevin, Sen., Thomas Warnock, James Porter, John Millar, Thomas Nevin, James Black, William Nevin, Jun., Hugh McConaghy, and William Keith. It would be impossible to overestimate the help I received in my earlier and inexperienced years, in the way of counsel and encouragement, of hearty sympathy and ever ready support, from some of these men, and more especially from Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Warnock.

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In 1874 it was thought desirable to add to the session, and the following were duly appointed: John Lees, C. M. Loughridge, David Black, William Moore, S. Rankin, and James Barr.

Speaking generally, these, like the former elders, were all good, sensible men—a few of them were exceptionally fine types of intelligent, wise, godly men. Taking the session as a whole, I may say that all of them were thoroughly trained in their various duties, and most earnest, thorough, and painstaking in their work. It was quite a revelation to me to witness the careful and businesslike way in which they discharged their delicate and oftentimes difficult duties. To begin with, *all* were teachers in the Sabbath-school. Some kept up district schools and prayer meetings of their own. There was a full meeting of the session every Sabbath morning, in the half hour between the closing of the Sabbath-school and the meeting for public worship. At this meeting cases of illness, or deaths, or anything calling for the attention of the session, were reported, and deputations appointed to visit and improve the occasion, and report to next meeting. Then there was prayer for a blessing on the minister and his message.

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This was all done in a solemn, yet business-like spirit—the spirit of men who felt that they had a mission for the Master and were seeking conscientiously to discharge it.

Then the session met occasionally on a week-evening, at the house of a member in the town, or at the manse, or in the session-room, to consider together some special aspect of congregational life or work, or some practical ways and means for advancing the moral and spiritual well-being of the people. All such deliberations were usually mingled with prayer for guidance, and followed by prayer for blessing. These meetings were generally most helpful, and brought out the quality of the men.

Discipline.

Then, as already stated, around each Communion there lay much work for the session. Some weeks before Communion a special meeting of session was held to “revise the communion roll”—not on paper, but to review and inquire into the character and conduct of the members in each district since last Communion. When anyone was reported as having fallen into sin, or as having openly lapsed from righteousness, and so brought

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scandal on the name of Christ and His Church, such cases were carefully considered, and the erring ones were generally summoned to appear before the session to be dealt with according to their fault. Sometimes, if the sin was confessed and sorrow expressed, they would be simply counselled, exhorted, and warned as to the future. But if the sin was a grave one and the true spirit of penitence was wanting, after pointed instruction and solemn exhortation, the offender was suspended from membership, and ordered not to appear at the Lord's Table until he had given satisfaction to the session. Discipline was very strictly exercised in my early years. At times I felt it was a little too harsh and severe to serve its purpose. For example: on one occasion in my first year, the session decided that I should call up a transgressor by name, in the congregation, and, while standing there, rebuke and exhort him in the presence of all. The favourite text of the disciplinarians was, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." That sounded authoritative, but I could not bring myself to do it, and might have replied "Let him that is without sin among you,

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cast the first stone." Who was I thus to treat a fellow sinner? Besides, I feared it would only dishonour and degrade the poor man in the eyes of all, and, probably, tend to harden him, and, with loss of self-respect, weaken him for future fight. I could not do it; but I said if this thing must be done I will exchange with some more experienced minister, and you can get him to perform this, to me, impossible task. That was the end of that kind of discipline. I was never again asked to do it. Such cases were afterwards dealt with by a deputation from the session waiting privately upon the erring brother or sister. Occasionally, to the very end, the truly penitent soul preferred to come before the session and confess and be restored.

Admission of Young Communicants.

Then, on the morning of the Fast Day, the session met an hour before church time to hear the examination of the young people who had attended my communicants' class. When the young folk had withdrawn, the elders inquired particularly as to the character and conduct of the several candidates. Those who knew any of them

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personally gave information to those who did not. When all were satisfied, the young people were called back again (as many as from fifteen to thirty), and when I had told them the mind of the session, and solemnly exhorted and admitted them to the membership of the Church, several of the elders, one after the other, would address them on the importance of the step they were taking; the need for watchfulness and prayer; the duty of daily study of the Word; etc., etc. When the young communicants were disposed of, there was usually about half an hour for prayer; generally three members had been appointed to lead, and a special subject assigned to each, all bearing upon the approaching Communion services. One might suppose all this session work in connection with the Communion would become very formal and cold. It was not so; it was, indeed, very real and earnest and helpful; it was a case of good men concerned about dealing faithfully with the solemn trust committed to them. Of course all were not equally capable or understanding or sympathetic, but, according to their gifts, they were wonderfully faithful, devout, and useful men. One who had

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been for long the most outstanding and distinguished member of session before my time was Mr. Neill Curry. He died in 1867, so I never had the privilege of knowing him, but I heard enough about his ability as a theologian and a teacher of young men. He seems to have excelled both in godliness and orthodoxy. I visited his daughters in his old home, and was shown the little room he had built at the back of his dwelling-house, which he called "the prophet's chamber," and into which he was in the habit of retiring daily for quiet meditation and prayer. When his minister or any godly neighbour called, most of their time together was spent in religious converse and prayer in this little room. A member of his large Bible class, who afterwards became one of our city ministers, and an intimate friend of mine, told me how much he owed to the teaching and influence of old Neill Curry. This little incident is characteristic. My friend was, one summer evening, walking along the Macosquin Road towards Coleraine, when Neill Curry, driving home alone on his side-car, met him, and pulled up, saying, "Young man, I hear you are going to leave us, going to Dublin ; it is a dangerous place for you to go to." When my friend told him it was

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Belfast, not Dublin, he was going to, he seemed to think that was not quite so bad. After a little further conversation, he took my young friend's hand, and, holding it firmly, said, "Young man, make God's Word your daily guide, ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and teach you, and make God's glory the end of your life," then said "good-bye" and drove off. The name and influence of Neill Curry still live in his neighbourhood.

To three who were members of the Session when I entered it, I feel I must make special reference. Two of these were Mr. Robert Nevin and Mr. James Laughlin, both remarkable for the same sweet and gentle piety; both generous and sympathetic souls. Neither had much to say on any subject, but they lived the Truth and breathed the loving spirit of their Lord. There was a wonderful attraction about their characters, and the good they did was chiefly wrought through the unconscious influence of genuine humble piety. They also took part quietly in active service. Mr. Nevin was for many years the Treasurer of the congregation, and one of its most generous supporters. Mr. Laughlin was for very many years the most zealous Superintendent of the Sabbath-

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school, and even as an old man, crippled with rheumatism, he continued to love the young and kept to his post as long as it was possible. To me, personally, Mr. Laughlin was not only an elder, but almost a father, and always a loved and trusted friend and helper.

The third man that I feel bound to notice was Mr. Thomas Warnock, an exceptionally bright and capable man in every way. Nothing came wrong to him. He was a living and progressive force in both Church and State—as zealous for Foreign Missions as for Land Reform. He was capable of taking his place with distinction on any public platform, and yet was the sympathetic friend and helper of the poor and needy in the quiet corners of life. After a little friction and misunderstanding over traditional forms of worship, he soon became my right-hand helper and whole-hearted friend. His keen, quick intelligence and single-minded devotion could always be relied upon. He was ever ready and eager to work for the advance of every good cause. At home he was an ideal father. After the hardest day's work he had still time and inclination left for a little playfulness with his children. Religion was kept prominent,

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but never severely so, in his home life. For many years he conducted an early morning Sabbath-school (7-30 to 8-30 a.m.) in a neighbouring school-house. Under his energetic and cheery management this good work went on through many testing years. All too early we had to mourn his loss, but his blessed memory abides.

Several of the other elders, notably Mr. James Black, were ideal in their kindly Christian character, and in unfailing courtesy and consideration for others.

XI

PURITY OF WORSHIP

It should be said of the whole session that they were all trained in the strictest Secession principles, and bound fast in the traditions of "Purity of Worship." No organ, hymn, or even paraphrase, would be tolerated. In this rigid position the whole eldership stood united. In my first year, at our first congregational social meeting, held in the church on a Wednesday evening, I had the misfortune, not knowing any better at that stage, after tea to give out the second Paraphrase to be sung. At once one of the elders, with a loud clearing of his throat, rose in his pew and went stamping out of the church. This, at a week-evening social meeting, staggered me for a moment, but, as no one else followed this noisy lead, the meeting settled down and went smoothly on to the end. But I had got a lesson and a warning as to how the land lay ahead.

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Not long after came my first and only stand-up fight with my session.

The Instrumental Music controversy in the General Assembly was then at its height, and I, at my first Assembly, knowing my session and congregation were hotly opposed, voted for liberty. "The fat was then in the fire." Just before the vote was taken, when the excitement was intense, and while I was standing in the crowded aisle of May Street church, a dear and revered old minister came along, and said to me in passing, "Well, my young friend, what are you going to do in this matter?" I began to tell him that my session and congregation were all strongly against liberty. He interrupted me rather abruptly, saying, "You are not here from your congregation or session; you are here from the Lord Jesus Christ. Act so as to please Him, to whom alone you are responsible." This, like a flash-light from Heaven, showed me where I stood, and put me on my metal. I would have dared the stake after that; and so, without doubt or hesitation, I voted according to my conscience, regardless of consequences. I had not an anxious moment afterwards, having, as I felt certain, done my duty to my Master and His Church.

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Other little troubles soon arose over the same burning question, of which it is not necessary to write in detail. All came to a head at a special meeting of session, at which I was to be called to account. The members were all in their places, or at least eleven of them, at the appointed hour, looking rather nervous, and yet all, personally, quite friendly toward me, but in regard to the use of instrumental music in public worship, immovable—adamant.

After the usual business was disposed of, I said, "Now, gentlemen, I am ready to hear anything you have to say about me or my conduct." Thereupon a clear and quiet statement was made by the clerk of session, of the grounds of their complaint. After which I replied with a full statement of the case from my point of view, and concluded by saying that if I was not to have liberty there to speak and act according to my convictions, I would have to go where that sacred right would not be denied me ; and proposed that they should take the minds of the congregation regarding my line of action, and if a simple majority voted against my liberty, I would most gladly resign my charge, and so relieve them of all further trouble with regard to me. Of

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course much more was said on both sides ; but that meeting was the first and the last of all serious trouble between the session and myself. Henceforth they were most careful, on the one side, and I on the other, not to wound or offend. Gradually the more intelligent members yielded to a larger liberty, but a few held on to their dear traditions for years. Eventually all gave way. Both teaching and patience were necessary. Slowly, but surely, this old-fashioned, tradition-bound, but good and genuine people, were almost unconsciously liberated.

XII

DEVELOPMENTS

I now resume the historic thread of my narrative at 1878. In this eventful year, toward the end of it, I married, having served seven years single, and the occasion was marked by the congregation in their usual hearty way. A social meeting was held, at which a congratulatory address and a silver Tea and Coffee service of beautiful design, with hot-water Jug to match, were presented to the minister and his bride, while two silver Salvers from the Sabbath-schools were presented to Mrs. Wylie.

At the same time the stipend was increased from £130 to £200 per annum, which was more than creditable to the congregation, considering the heavy debt under which they were still struggling. I may add here that at this figure the stipend was maintained until 1890, from which date onwards all the pew rents were treated as stipend, and passed to the minister; and

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on several occasions the amount reached exceeded £290. I set down these figures here as showing, in a striking way, the generous spirit of the congregation. Even while constant efforts were necessary to meet interest, or to pay off debts, not only stipend but missionary and philanthropic funds were largely increased.

In the year 1881 it was felt to be desirable to remove the old stoves by which the church had hitherto been heated, and introduce a system of hot-water heating. Better lighting and some general renovation had also to be done, at a cost of £220. This expenditure greatly added to the comfort and the appearance of the church.

The next year, 1882, proved a great year in the history of the congregation. First of all, in this year, the congregation was divided into districts, thirteen in all—eight in the country and five in the town. An elder, a member of committee, and a sustentation collector were placed in charge of each. Hitherto the Committee had consisted of almost forty members ; the position was one of honour rather than of active service. The great majority of the members had nothing to do, and did it cheerfully. Now the number was cut down by more than

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half, and a definite sphere of duty and responsibility assigned to each member in his district; while inside, at our church services, the Committee were made, collectively, responsible for taking up the offerings, counting and lodging the money, examining and settling accounts, etc. The elders previously had done most of this work. The new arrangement was a great improvement, giving new interest and active prominence to members of committee who, before, were naturally indifferent, being ignored. These district divisions, with a fixed staff of workers for each, proved a success from the first, and, I believe, are still maintained.

The Annual Report for 1882 gave list of divisions, with names of elders, committeemen, and collectors first placed in charge, as follows:—

“CONGREGATION OF TERRACE ROW.

MINISTER—REV. R. B. WYLIE, LL.D.

ELDERS—James Laughlin, Thomas Warnock, James Porter, John Millar, Thomas Nevin, James Black, Hugh M'Conaghy, William Keith, John Lees, C. M. Loughridge, David Black, William Moore, and James Barr.

COMMITTEE—Samuel Henry, John Ross, John Rankin, Wm Boyce, David Love, Thomas Agnew, Wm. M'Graw, Joseph Lyons, W. J. Baxter, J. S. B. Curry, John Morrow, J. Clarke, George Gilmore, Wm. Houston.

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DISTRICTS.

The congregation has been divided into Thirteen Districts, with an Elder, a Member of Committee, and a Sustentation Collector in charge of each.

<i>District.</i>		<i>Elder.</i>
1.	Kiltinny	James Black
2.	Gateside	Hugh M'Conaghy
3.	Boghill	James Barr
4.	Tullans	David Black
5.	Loughan	Thos. Warnock
6.	Castleroe	Wm. Moore
7.	Ballinteer	John Lees
8.	Ballycairn	James Porter
9.	Killowen	Samuel Campbell
10.	Brook Street, etc.	Thomas Nevin
11.	Commons, etc.	C. M. Loughridge
12.	New Row, etc.	Do.
13.	Meeting House, etc...	James Barr
<i>Committee.</i>		<i>Susten. Collector.</i>
1.	Joseph Lyons	Miss Jamieson
2.	J. S. B. Curry	Miss Glenn
3.	J. Morrow, Jun.	Miss Morrow
4.	J. Clarke	Miss Moore
5.	Wm. Boyce	Miss Warnock
6.	David Love	{ Miss Moody and Miss Givins
7.	Wm. Houston	Miss Houston
8.	John Rankin	Miss Finlay
9.	Geo. Gilmore	Miss Walker
10.	Samuel Henry	{ Miss Hunter and
11.	Thos. Agnew	{ Miss Irwin
12.	John Ross	{ Miss Laughlin and
13.	Wm. M'Graw	{ Miss Nevin

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THOMAS WARNOCK, Clerk of Session.

W. J. BAXTER, Secretary of Congregation.

BELFAST BANK, Treasurer for do.

MISS LAUGHLIN, Treasurer for Sustentation Fund.

S. E. STRONGE, Convener of Sustentation Committee."

New Year Offerings.

In this year, also, New Year offerings were begun, and continued without a break for six years. They produced an average of £70 each year. This meant a real effort, both generous and general. A few of the members gave £5 each annually, but the smaller givings of the rank and file were needed for the success which was attained.

I may say here that the distinguishing characteristic of the congregation, and the one which in the end solved all our financial difficulties, was the absolute unanimity and heartiness of the whole people from first to last. All were helpers as they were able—sometimes, indeed, beyond their ability. Without this, such rapid and persistent spending and paying would have been impossible. Fortunately, I think, we had no outstanding rich members on whom the others could rely; so all, even the poorest, felt called upon to do their part. It was inevitable that an odd member, here and there, would get tired of the constant

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appeals, and might show it. For example: soon after one of our largest New Year offerings, I was visiting in the house of an elder in the country, and I began to tell the good wife, proudly, how much we had received on Sabbath morning, and while I stood, expecting congratulation and encouragement, she stared rather fiercely at me, and said, "A hope that'll stap your mouth for a while!" I was really more amused than hurt, conscious that I was working successfully for them, not for myself. Still, even such an one, after her little grumble was over, would fall into line for the next effort and do her part. Only by this perfect unity of heart, and will, and hand, could such a close succession of difficulties have been overcome.

XIII

DEBT EXTINCTION

I now pass on, leaving the subject of quarterly collections and New Year offerings, and going forward, to the memorable year of 1889, which became our first "Debt Extinction" year, and so a year of relief and rejoicing.

By great good fortune—rather, I should say, by a kind Providence—we were left at this time a legacy by Miss Martin, of Clifton Terrace, amounting to £463, towards payment of our church debts. Miss Martin was an earnest young Christian, fond of her church, and, if I may say so, of her minister. She possessed this money in her own right, and, knowing she was dying, bequeathed it to me for the church. The congregation, encouraged by this noble generosity, resolved to make another, and final, effort. All joined in heartily, and, by a single subscription list, raised £326 10s. This, along with Miss Martin's legacy, covered all our

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existing indebtedness and left a balance over of £26 19s. 2d. After all our prolonged strivings, it was difficult to believe that we were, indeed, free of all debt. A social meeting of the congregation was called to celebrate the occasion. The following report of the meeting, from the *Coleraine Chronicle*, may be interesting, although it may repeat some of the things already stated. I give it as a revelation of the character and spirit of the congregation.

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A MEMORABLE MEETING.

NEVER had a congregation reason to feel more proud than the good people of Terrace Row had on Thursday evening. For years they had been struggling under the burden of debt, little by little removing it as time went on, but Thursday evening witnessed the finish of what has proved a most successful effort to shake itself free. The burden had been a heavy one, and the bright faces gathered together in the school-room betokened a consciousness of "something attempted, something done." The exact figures are given below, in Dr. Wylie's address, and we may only add that we heartily congratulate minister and people upon the very remarkable occurrences of the past fortnight or three weeks. The result is highly creditable to all concerned, and we think we can trace the origin of

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the movement to Rev. R. B. Wylie, LL.D., minister of the congregation, who enjoys, in a very special degree, the love and respect and esteem of his congregation, and who deserves to receive the hearty congratulations of his spirited people upon the success of the effort. In order to commemorate the occasion, the session and committee invited the congregation to tea at a *conversazione*, and the number of those who accepted the invitation was so great that it was impossible to find accommodation for them in the large lecture-hall. The hall was beautifully decorated, and so were the adjoining rooms. Never before did they present such an attractive appearance, and never before did a congregation experience such thorough, hearty enjoyment. Rejoicing was reflected in every countenance. Punctually at seven o'clock tea was served, the following ladies assisting at the tea-tables : Mrs. Love, Mrs. S. Henry, Mrs. Loughridge, Mrs. J. Barr, Mrs. Wylie, Mrs. Morrow, Mrs. Agnew, and Miss Nevin. The bread-room was in charge of Miss Laughlin, Mrs. Moorhead, Mrs. Dr. Barr, and Mrs. Ferguson ; and in the tea-room Miss Baxter and Miss Hunter superintended.

After tea, Rev. Dr. Wylie having taken the chair, the 23rd Psalm was sung.

The Chairman then addressed the meeting. He said—In my own name and in the name of the session and committee I wish to bid you all heartily welcome. I think I never before saw the congregation so fully represented at a social meeting, and I do not know the cause of this except it be that our recent giving to one object has drawn our hearts together. (Applause.) I daresay you are anxious to know the result of our late efforts. We are met on a truly great congregational occasion. We have had for seventeen years a steady,

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stiff, uphill pull. During this time we have twice renovated our church—re-seating and painting it at one time ; heating, lighting, and painting it at another time. We have built a manse which, to my mind, would do credit to any congregation in the Assembly ; and we have erected this lecture-hall, with its four adjoining class-rooms, which, for the accommodation it affords and for general convenience, is second to none that I have yet seen. The whole of this work has been done at a cost of about £3,500. (Applause.) It was almost too great an undertaking for such a congregation. And during all these years we have been making effort after effort, as we were able, to pay off this large sum. At times we felt the burden heavy, and were “hard put to it.” But by union and pluck, and a generous spirit which was ever ready to respond to the appeal of need, and by the power of keeping at it, we stand to-night free of all debt. (Cheers.) The Board of Works, the bank, and local creditors are all paid off, or are more than provided for. (Cheers.) A friend, writing me congratulations the other day on the success of our latest efforts, said—“Debt, next to sin, is the worst curse, and the most galling burden.” If that be so, and I think experience confirms it, then to be free from debt, next to getting free from sin, should afford us the greatest joy and the largest sense of relief. That being so, this should indeed be a happy meeting, seeing it has been convened on purpose to celebrate our freedom from debt. (Applause.) There are many ways both of getting into debt and of trying to get out of it, and most of us know it is much easier to get into it than to get out of it. To get free from church debts many devices are resorted to—special services, with the ablest preacher procurable, and special collectors, with

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appeals to the outside public to help ; going abroad over this and other lands to beg for help ; getting up bazaars and sales of work in the hope of realising the needed funds. We have in the past tried some of these expedients, not without success, and we would not be unmindful to-night of generous help received from friends and neighbours in bygone days, but still we are here to testify that the method last adopted, and followed exclusively for ten or twelve years past, is, indeed, "the more excellent way"—the method of doing our own work within ourselves. This fosters self-respect, cultivates generous feeling, and develops congregational spirit, and unity, and responsibility. There is, besides, a positive pleasure felt, a joy experienced, in sacrificing to do our own work, which is impossible if others do it for us. This joy of sacrificing I have never seen illustrated so forcibly as during the last fortnight, and those who sacrificed most seemed to rejoice most in our success. (Applause.) The passage on which I based my appeal to you two weeks ago, as containing an ideal to be emulated, is now actual history in our own experience—"On that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced ; for God had made them rejoice with great joy : the wives also and the children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." It was our privilege to witness just such a scene on Sabbath week. Great sacrifices were literally offered, with joy, with enthusiasm. I have noticed a new light in the faces of the members, which could only come from a sense of duty done, and well done, of difficulties nobly and heroically overcome. Thus, in this spirit of joyous sacrifice, we have been enabled to make an end of our pecuniary troubles, and successfully to accomplish what seemed impossible. (Applause.) But

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now you will be anxious to know how the figures stand. Well, you will remember that our total debt before this effort was made was £769, that the amount of Miss Martin's legacy, to which public allusion has already been made, was £463, that this sum, deducted from the total debt, left £306 to be raised by us at one effort. Could this be done? Some shook their heads. Others, when the matter was explained, thought we might come near doing it; and a few thought it was barely possible. I acknowledge I felt there was some risk of failure; still I had strong faith that we both could and would do it, so we resolved to try. On Sabbath fortnight, as I appealed to you, and looked into your faces, I felt confident the thing was as good as done. I then asked you to make this final effort the crowning one of all for heartiness, and unanimity, and effect; in short, to make a clean sweep of the debt, and leave no remnant of it to trouble us later on. I believed then you would do this, and I am proud and thankful to say it is now done. (Applause.) On the following Sabbath morning, before we left the church, we had reached the magnificent sum of £260. (Applause.) Two days later, when some of the absent members had sent in their contributions, the committee met, and found the figures had risen to £316. (Applause.) The droppings have hardly yet ceased, but the exact figures now are £326 10s. (Loud cheers.) But I have not told you the best of it. The larger part of this amount is already paid, and the remainder is to be paid on or before the last Sabbath of November. (Applause.) This is a truly wonderful achievement for us in these times. I doubt whether, all things considered, a parallel could be found for it in the whole history of our Church in this land. Such a response, from such a congregation, after what has

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been already done, and freely made on a simple invitation from the pulpit, has no parallel that I know of. And the best of it is its entire unanimity and heartiness. The subscriptions vary from £20 to 2s., and the list of subscribers is just about equal to the number of seat-holders. Our perfect unanimity has been our strength, right through our difficulties, and explains our position to-night. Rich and poor, old and young, town and country—all have gladly helped. Some, of course, have been warmer and more generous, according to their means, than others. Still, all have held together and pulled together, and hence the result. I begin to wonder what is there that a united, hearty congregation, even of moderate means, could not accomplish. When the people have a mind to work, difficulties soon disappear. I congratulate you with all my heart on the position we have attained, and you may as heartily congratulate me, for we have been fellow-labourers for the one end; we have borne the burden together, and together we shall share the joy. (Applause.) Now, I hope we may regard the success of our effort in a higher light—as an evidence of healthy spiritual life, of devotion to Christ our Master, of growing generosity, and of concern for the credit and honour of the cause for which we are specially responsible. In this light others regard it. Dr. Wylie here read a letter he had received from the Rev. R. J. Lynd, Moderator of the General Assembly, as follows: “I am delighted with your success. It has been achieved in the best way, and brought to a consummation in the best possible spirit. It is an indication of spiritual vitality which speaks volumes for both minister and people. While sharing in your joy, I trust that the future of Terrace Row and of yourself may be still brighter and more abun-

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dantly blessed than even the past has been." Rev. Dr. Wylie continued—I trust our freedom from financial responsibilities will open the way for more spiritual work. In proportion as care and anxiety about debts pass away we can give the more to spiritual things. May this be so in our experience. We were never in better form, as regards numbers, strength, and spirit, for doing real Christian work. Let us seek to turn it to account for God. Be sure of this—only as we live and work for others can we really prosper and grow ourselves. There will be an end to our growth if we try just to "rest and be thankful," if we get to feel self-satisfied and self-contained, or if we think only or chiefly of our own good and upbuilding as a congregation. Even struggling with debts would be better for us, would tend more to strengthen and develop us, than resting easily and passively, content with our attainments, and making no real sacrifice for the good of others and the growth of the Kingdom. Every true Christian must have a practical aim in life beyond self. So with a Christian congregation. We must think and pray, and give and work for those that are without if we are to be worthy of the Christian name and prosper spiritually. The more we give to missions the more missionary faith, and spirit, and enthusiasm we shall have ourselves. The more we work among the poor and careless, the more charity and true Christian sympathy we shall have. So every inner grace can only be cultivated by engaging in the fitting outward work that will appeal to it and call it forth. We have in our membership many earnest excellent young men and women. Let them organise better for practical usefulness. I am thankful, indeed, that many are already engaged in the various departments of Christian work, but might

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there not be more workers still and better work done ? Let us try in God's name ; and while this meeting must be long memorable as celebrating our deliverance from debt, as the closing scene of a long struggle to provide ourselves with proper congregational equipment, let us seek to make it still more memorable as inaugurating a new era of greater devotion to Christ, as the starting point in a career of greater and ever-increasing effort for the extension of the Kingdom and the honour of the King. (Loud applause.)

A portion of the 46th Psalm, beginning "God is our refuge and our strength, in straits a present aid," having been sung,

Mr. Thomas Nevin (Clerk of Session) said—I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying a few words. After the very satisfactory and exhaustive statement of Dr. Wylie, you will not expect a speech from me. I only appear before you with a single message, one of congratulation and thankfulness from the Session. We are greatly pleased and satisfied with the unanimity and heartiness with which, as a congregation, you have met the present appeal. We see in it the evidence of the power of a faithfully preached Gospel, and the influence of the truth on your hearts and minds. (Applause.) In connection with our work in this place we are stimulated and resolved to take courage for future progress, and this evening we feel we can sincerely and gratefully ask you to raise our "Ebenezer" of thanksgiving and praise, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." None of our friends in the working of the congregation but will acknowledge that I have invariably traced the keystone of our success to the proper quarter. I have always held our success has been our pulpit power—(loud applause)—and I can confidently look back on the past to-night and say that no project has been put

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before us by Dr. Wylie but met with the success it deserved. (Applause.) One of our late lamented members of session often said, "We are fed with the finest of the wheat," and this holds true in the opinion of every member of the congregation. We are taught our duty faithfully. The glorious Gospel of the blessed God is preached fully and with power every Sabbath, and the sermons we listen to are real expositions of the Divine Truth, calculated to influence and improve the mind and character of all who hear them. (Applause.) To the pulpit power in this congregation we attribute much of our progress and success as a united people. I well remember (and I cannot help referring to it this evening) some thirteen years ago, when a call came from Manchester to Dr. Wylie, you sent a few friends to the Presbytery to meet the deputies from England ; your representatives, one and all, pressed for Dr. Wylie to remain. They said, and felt, his work was not done here. We, as a congregation, had serious obligations at the time, and were only beginning new projects ; viz., the erection of this lecture-hall and rooms in which all are assembled to-night. The battle was well fought by your representatives ; the trying crisis passed over : Dr. Wylie remained,—here to-night among us in his proper place, in health and vigour ; and now I may say truthfully he has seen the fulfilment of the work then contemplated fully accomplished—a church, schools, and manse, free of debt. Now, my dear friends, while the uppermost feelings in all our hearts are those of gratitude and thankfulness, should we not also humble ourselves on account of our great unworthiness and shortcomings, and take these tokens of temporal favours as but the earnest of better and higher blessings which shall endure when all things around us here will perish.

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Mr. W. J. Baxter (secretary) was called upon loudly by the audience. He said—Mr. Chairman and Christian friends, the feeling of being entirely free from official duty at a social meeting is a source of no ordinary pleasure. At our last one, as regards your financial statement, you let me have that privilege. I enjoyed rather the luxury of listening, but you have again thrown the chain of circumstances around me. However, “at such a time as this it is not meet that every nice offence should bear its comment”; for to-night there is a sense in which we all enjoy the fullest freedom. As a congregation, like many other foolish children, we had wandered into a far-off country. When there, we were horrified to find ourselves prisoners in the country of an enemy where debt was king. We wandered amongst mountains of difficulties in consequence, and as we tried to find a pathway back, we got the more entangled; but there were brave hearts amongst us, and a brave, inspiring leader in the person of our beloved Chairman; so with a will we set to work, and hewed right through the mountains a pathway for ourselves. (Applause.) Is it any wonder there are words of welcome on our lips to-night, as we find ourselves at home again, and free from the grasp of such a tyrant? No wonder we look with gladness on each other’s faces, and then, like the Swiss patriot, look up unto our God and thank Him we are free. Our church is free, our manse and schools are free; every department of our work is free; and to be able, at the outset, to announce this fact cannot but awaken a thrill of pleasure in every heart. Speaking of progress, Terrace Row has no reason to look back with regret. Mr. Black, with his usual thoughtfulness, has placed in my hands a financial statement of exactly twenty years ago. Comparisons may be helpful as well

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as stimulating. For instance : I notice the sum total of your income then was £270. Last year, not including your princely munificence on Sabbath week, it was about £700. Then, the stipend was not the half of what it is at present ; there was neither Sustentation Fund nor Orphan Society, Dorcas Society or Temperance Union. Now we have all these and other associations in vigorous life.

An interval of twenty minutes here took place, during which an adjournment was made to the church, where a large number of beautiful views were displayed with the aid of a magic lantern by Mr. James Bellas and Mr. Stewart Hunter, Jun. The pictures illustrated a tour in Ireland, and the descriptive matter was read by Mr. W. J. Baxter. The proceedings in the lecture-hall were then resumed, Mr. D. Cunningham singing in his usual good style, "I really can't keep still"—"With Dr. Wylie at our head we really can't keep still!" Miss Nellie Henry then sang a solo, "Fiddle and I," beautifully ; Mr. S. Hunter, Jun., following with a reading, "Paddy the Piper," which created much amusement. Miss Nevin sang "Hay-making" attractively, and Mr. A. Macaulay sang "Slattery's Mounted Fut," an item which was successfully rendered.

The Chairman then expressed the thanks of the audience to all who had assisted in making the meeting so enjoyable, and concluded by exhorting the congregation to greater exertion in Christian work in future.

The doxology having been sung and the benediction pronounced, the proceedings terminated.

The above report, for both fulness and accuracy, does credit to the *Chronicle*, which

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always freely opened its columns for the furtherance of every good cause.

After this deliverance from debt we moved ahead very cautiously, for a few years, as regards spending; but we gave ourselves all the more heartily to the working out of the many moral and religious organisations already set on foot in the congregation. The Town Mission and Cottage Meetings were worked more vigorously, and many new workers were recruited. Some money was needed to pay the rent of cottages in various districts, which were cleared out and fitted up, and sometimes two thrown into one, for the accommodation and comfort of these meetings. For these purposes the needed funds were always forthcoming, and for many years this work prospered abundantly.

In connection with our Sabbath-schools there are two names, clearly outstanding, that I feel I must mention,—those of Mr. C. M. Loughridge and Sir William Baxter.

Mr. Loughridge had been an honoured elder since 1874, Clerk of Session, and Superintendent of our morning school for very many years. He was Principal of the Irish Society's Boys' School, and proved himself capable, efficient, and devoted to duty in

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every sphere he entered. A more faithful, conscientious man, in his own quiet, unassuming way, I have never known. He had a literary culture and a natural refinement which, owing to his modesty and reticence, only his intimates were able to appreciate.

Of Sir William Baxter too much could not be said. His practical devotion and generosity to every good cause knew no bounds. As Secretary to the Congregation he gave his time and talents without stint ; as superintendent of the evening school he gave book prizes every year, almost too lavishly, at his own cost. He taught a young men's class at the same hour in the session-room. He took a leading part in the weekly prayer meeting, and was seldom absent. In the Young People's Guild he gave invaluable help. In town mission work and in addressing cottage meetings he was untiring. With all his active duties he kept up his reading—his literary taste was quite marked. As an all-round, useful, Christian man he had few equals. I owe him much for valued help in many spheres.

XIV

TEMPERANCE REFORMATION

Another good and difficult cause, to which I felt called upon to give much thought and effort, especially in the first half of my ministry, was the Temperance Reformation. There was crying need for this work when I began in Coleraine. The people's eyes had not been opened to the enormous evils—social, moral, and spiritual—flowing from the drink traffic. Even Church Courts and respectable church members lent their sanction, and, by their example, the sanction of the Christian religion, to this blighting traffic—habitually and openly sharing in the drinking customs of the time. I need not enlarge upon the general question, but simply note briefly some of the more striking facts in my own experience. First of all, I found no fewer than fourteen families, in full membership in the congregation, directly engaged in, and making their living by, the sale of intoxicating drinks. Most of them

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were respectable, decent men, without reproach in any other respect, and some of them taking an active interest in church life and work. Hitherto they had stood uncondemned, in fact shielded and fortified in their calling by the sanction and patronage they received from the general Christian public. So far as I know there was not even one pronounced or pledged total abstainer in the congregation, and no attempt had yet been made to establish a Temperance Society, or even a Band of Hope, in connection with the church.

Illustrating the then state of things, I may note, as it is now ancient history—at the conclusion of the Monday service following my first communion, I was invited by the elders to go with them into the vestry, and join them in refreshing themselves with the strong port wine and bread left over from the communion. Probably I looked shocked, but said only “No, thank you,” and one elder coming after me, and hearing my refusal, also said “No; what the minister cannot do, I’ll not do”—and, there and then, the Temperance Reformation had begun. I felt at once I was in for a hard fight with this long-standing and deeply-rooted evil. To my glad surprise

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reform was much easier than I had anticipated. Before the next meeting of session I had very carefully prepared a statement with three reasons why every professing Christian should, in existing circumstances, be a total abstainer. The first reason was from love to God ; the second, love to our fellow-men ; and the third, love to our own souls. Each reason was clinched with an appropriate text of scripture. These I copied into the front page of a pass-book, and over them I wrote the simple pledge—"I promise, with God's help, to abstain from all intoxicating drinks as beverages, and to discourage their use in society for the following reasons." Thus armed I went, with some trepidation, but with full determination, to the next meeting of session. I fancy something special was expected, and there was a full meeting. As soon as the ordinary business was over I produced my temperance book. I then stated as forcibly and convincingly as I could the temperance situation as I saw it, dwelling especially on the responsibility of the Church of Christ in regard to the destroying traffic, and on the duty of church members, and more especially of the elders and leaders of the church, in relation to the drinking customs of society. I then read

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over the pledge, and the reasons for signing it, and, in their presence, signed my own name first, and expressed the hope that many of them would see their way to follow. What was my relief and joy to find, after a conference and a few questions asked and answered, every man present signed that pledge, except one saintly old gentleman who was so extremely conscientious that, because he had to take a little as medicine occasionally, preferred not to sign, but his whole heart was with the movement, he assured us. I saw at once that they were prepared and ready for the change,—they had, indeed, been only waiting to be led, and glad I was to be their leader. I went home a happy man that night, feeling that the temperance movement was, at least, successfully begun. I then turned to the committee, and, after some persuasion, got a large proportion of them to sign on. Next I addressed the Sabbath-schools on the subject, and found most of the teachers and adult scholars ready and glad to join the total abstinence ranks. When the time came round for the annual visitation of the widely scattered country districts, I took my temperance book with me, and the last appeal in every house was for total abstinence

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recruits. A delicate and trying situation arose in a few of the more respectable houses when, after the elder and I were seated, a tray, with glasses and decanter and plate of biscuits, was placed on the table, and we were invited to take some refreshments. We had then not only to refuse, but to give our reasons, and put in a plea for temperance recruits. We never pressed any unduly, so as to lose their sympathy, even when they did not see their way to sign. When the visitation was over, I found my book contained the names of 350 pledged total abstainers! This, I felt, was surely a hopeful start for the good cause.

The Temperance Union was immediately organized,—the Band of Hope came later. We wished to have the “grown-ups” first enlisted. Having secured a fine, active, and capable staff of office-bearers, we got a beautifully illuminated pledge card prepared and printed, with the words “Terrace Row Presbyterian Church Temperance Union” at the top, and the words of the pledge itself in the centre, with a few short, suitable texts round the margin, and two blank lines at foot, on which the member taking the pledge, with an officer of the Union as witness, signed their names. We tried to

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have an attractive and useful programme for every public meeting, and so the Union grew and prospered exceedingly for many years, until the whole tone and atmosphere of the place had completely changed on this question. Then, again, I tried to make the most of the Temperance Sermon every year, dealing faithfully and sparing no one, but placing the chief blame, not on the publicans, though they could not escape, but upon the professing Christians who patronised and supported them. So the number of publicans in the congregation gradually decreased from fourteen to one only, long before I retired from active duty. Some of them changed their calling, but continued members. There was, perhaps, no other aspect of the congregational life in which the change was so marked and so complete, or in which I found so great satisfaction.

XV

TWENTIETH YEAR OF SERVICE

In 1891, in my twentieth year of service, the congregational spirit and enthusiasm again rose to such a height that it could not be suppressed. Another social meeting was held, and a beautifully illuminated, and far too flattering, address was presented to me, with a cheque for 100 guineas. The usual complimentary speeches were made during the evening. Only one of the items—a unique one—submitted at that meeting is reproduced here. It is an original poem, bearing on the occasion, by Miss Susie Troland. Let it speak for itself and for her.

TO

REV. R. B. WYLIE, A.M., LL.D.,

On the completion of a Pastorate of Twenty Years.

The flowers have blossomed twenty times,
The swallows gone across the sea,
And back returned with leaves, and buds,
And sound of waters gushing free.

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And hearts that then beat strong and high
Now slumber calmly 'neath the sod,
Since first we hailed thee, leader, guide,
The standard-bearer of our God.

Yes, twenty years of sun and shade
Have swept above us since we met ;
And still we fold thee to our hearts,
And clasp thee closer, closer yet.
What bitter pangs the days have brought,
What baffled hopes, what burning tears ;
Each trial forged an added link
To bind us faster through the years.

Thine hand hath held the banner high—
The King's own banner, fair and bright ;
And soldiers, halting in the march,
Have looked and caught its fold of light,
And forward pressed with ardour new.
And faith has conquered all their fears,
As on they marched where thou hast led,
And borne the standard twenty years.

Thy voice has rung like trumpet-blast,
And sounded out the doom of sin,
Until we trembled lest at last
Our souls should miss the King's "Come in."
But then, like music full and clear,
Love's message to the heart made way
And banished every mist of doubt,
As shadows melt at dawn of day.

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Beloved ! now we crown thy brow
With many a fragrant bud and flower
Of pure affection, bright and fresh,
Culled from the heart's most sacred bower.
God bless thee ! guard thee ! strengthen thee !
To be our guide through joy or tears ;
No halting till the sun hath set ;
Thy motto, "Onward ! Upward yet !"
As it has been through twenty years.

14th February, 1891.

XVI

LENGTHENING OF CORDS

It is difficult to believe that a sober-minded, sensible people, who, as lately as 1889, became so jubilant over debt extinction, should, early in the year 1891, at a united meeting of Session and Committee, supported, later, by a meeting of the congregation, unanimously resolve to enlarge and remodel the church, at a cost which ultimately exceeded £1,800. Yet this they heroically and heartily did. And, indeed, the proposed changes were much needed, for the old church was not only too small, but it was painfully plain and out of date ; also it was quite out of harmony with the other church buildings which had now been erected. I may say here, in confidence, I think it probable that the good people were stimulated to this great forward movement by the knowledge that had reached them of a Call to First Armagh Congregation which I had just received, and refused. Whether so influenced or not, they entered most heartily

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into this new enterprise, and subscribed at once, amongst themselves, about £700. This proposed change in the church building meant the adding of large transepts and turning of the side galleries into them, thus clearing the space around the pulpit and removing to a distance the gallery audience. It also meant building a new and somewhat ornamental front to the church. Till then it had been very plain, simply a hip-roofed gable end, with a large door in the centre. The new front, with its three open arches, contained a large outer porch, from which sprang, on either side, a new stairway to the galleries. The old stairs—rising from the small inner porch, and showing inside the church—were removed, and with them the congestion and delay that had always been experienced in getting out of church; the currents from above and below meeting in the little inner porch. Now, as proposed, the gallery people would land in the large outer porch, so securing greater freedom for all. The plan also provided separate doors into the wings.

The work was immediately put in hand. True, we did not see from the beginning all that was found necessary to do as the work proceeded. In remodelling an old building, one

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thing leads to and necessitates another. I had long been planning out the chief changes. The new north wing of the church was to be extended to meet the south wing of the school buildings, off which a passage would be taken, affording two new entrances to the church. Formerly, from the vestry to the church, there was a long glass-covered passage, for the minister only, connecting the two buildings. Now the two were to be connected so as to open into each other—a happy symbol of the close relationship of school to church. It was soon found that the old pews and the old flooring would have to be discarded, and the whole area of old and new parts floored and pewed in harmony. All pews were to be modern, in pitch pine, varnished; also a new front to the galleries was called for; and, later, new lead-light windows for the entire church. In addition, new rugs, all of one colour and quality, were furnished for all pews. Lastly, a new pulpit of handsome design, in oak and elegantly upholstered, was added. As all this necessarily required a long time to complete, the congregation had to worship, for over twelve months, in the lecture-hall, and we actually seemed to enjoy the closer contact and fellowship which this change involved.

XVII

CHANGES IN CHURCH SERVICES

At this point, while waiting for the new church, it may be well to go back and give a brief account of some important changes that took place, from time to time, in our worship, more especially in connection with our Communion Services. I have already told of the many services surrounding our communion, and of the prolonged Sabbath service, with its four or five tables, and the many addresses before and after—the whole extending from 11 o'clock until nearly 5 o'clock. This was too much for any one man to be charged with, or even for the edification of the most pious people. We first dropped the Saturday service, and, after a time, that of Monday. For one or two communions I took the whole of the Sabbath services; then set myself to try and get Simultaneous Communion adopted.

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Simultaneous Communion.

This was a difficult and delicate matter with such an old-fashioned, traditional people, who regarded everything that had been in connection with the communion as sacred. I began by getting the elders to tea in the manse, and then laying the matter, with its many advantages, before them. I had seen and joined in simultaneous communion in Belfast, and knew from experience how convenient and impressive it was. After some persuasion they agreed that I should bring the matter before the congregation on the following Sabbath, which was two weeks before the next communion. On the Sabbath morning the Clerk of Session came to me with a very serious face to say that he had been talking to some of the people on the subject, and he feared there would be many obstinate objectors, that the risk would be very great, and advised me to let the matter rest for the present. "But," I said, "we solemnly agreed to proceed, and I am now prepared to state the case in favour, and cannot go back." And so, at some little risk, no doubt, I made out the best case I could for the change. The proposal was that the whole floor of the church should be used for com-

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munion—the members on the gallery taking their places below at the beginning of the service, thus avoiding change or movement during any part of the service. The old class distinctions that had grown up between those going to the different tables would thus disappear, and we would be all one Christian family, visibly as well as really. Further, by communicating at the same time, one address would do for all. In the result, not one was offended—in fact the change was welcomed—and the next communion was the largest, the most simple and enjoyable on record. This was in 1876.

Unfermented Wine.

A few years later the success of the Temperance movement made it necessary that we should consider the question of introducing unfermented wine at our communion services. This was a thorny question, and it was thought that the older people might not tolerate the change. But again, having got the session to agree, I stated the case to the congregation a full month before communion, bringing every argument I could think of to bear in favour of the change. I was fortunate in having my brother, Rev. J. B. Wylie, of Belfast, with me that day,

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for he had had some very sad experiences of the evil and the danger of having intoxicating wine at communion. These experiences he told most impressively from the pulpit, and, as I listened, I felt that the battle was won. Not only were there no objectors, but one of the members we thought most likely to object said to me at the close, "If all that is true, why did you not introduce the other wine long ago." Again we had a larger attendance than usual at communion, for some of the Good Templars and strong total abstainers had been staying away from communion for some time because of the use of fermented wine. Thus another difficult problem was safely and satisfactorily solved.

Individual Cups.

Some years after this change a desire for the Individual Cup at communion became pretty strong and general. Even the oldest and least advanced member of session came to me, privately, to say he would have no objection to the individual cups. After a little conference the way was clear for this change also. Fortunately I had charge of a small legacy at the time, to be used as I might advise in connection with the church.

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This I thought would be an admirable use to make of, at least, part of it, and soon the congregation was in possession of a fine communion set. I may note here that the lead-light windows in the church, as well as supplies of psalters for the choir, were also paid for out of this small legacy of Miss Ellen Hunter, of Railway Road.

XVIII

THE NEW CHURCH

I now return to the subject of our new or transformed church, which was finished towards the end of 1892, and proved, in every way—in appearance, accommodation, and comfort—a great success. The cost, as stated, was £1,850, and only about £700 had yet been raised. We applied to the Irish Society for help, and, after hard pleading, got a grant of £200. In 1893 I put in a strong plea for another New Year offering, which resulted in gifts amounting to £97 1s. 6*d.*—a surprisingly generous response after all that had been done. Unfortunately most of this was needed to pay interest.

Soon after this new church work was begun, a rumour reached me that a plot of ground by the side of our school buildings was about to be taken for a factory, and knowing that we, as a congregation, would soon be requiring space for a sexton's house and for stabling, I applied

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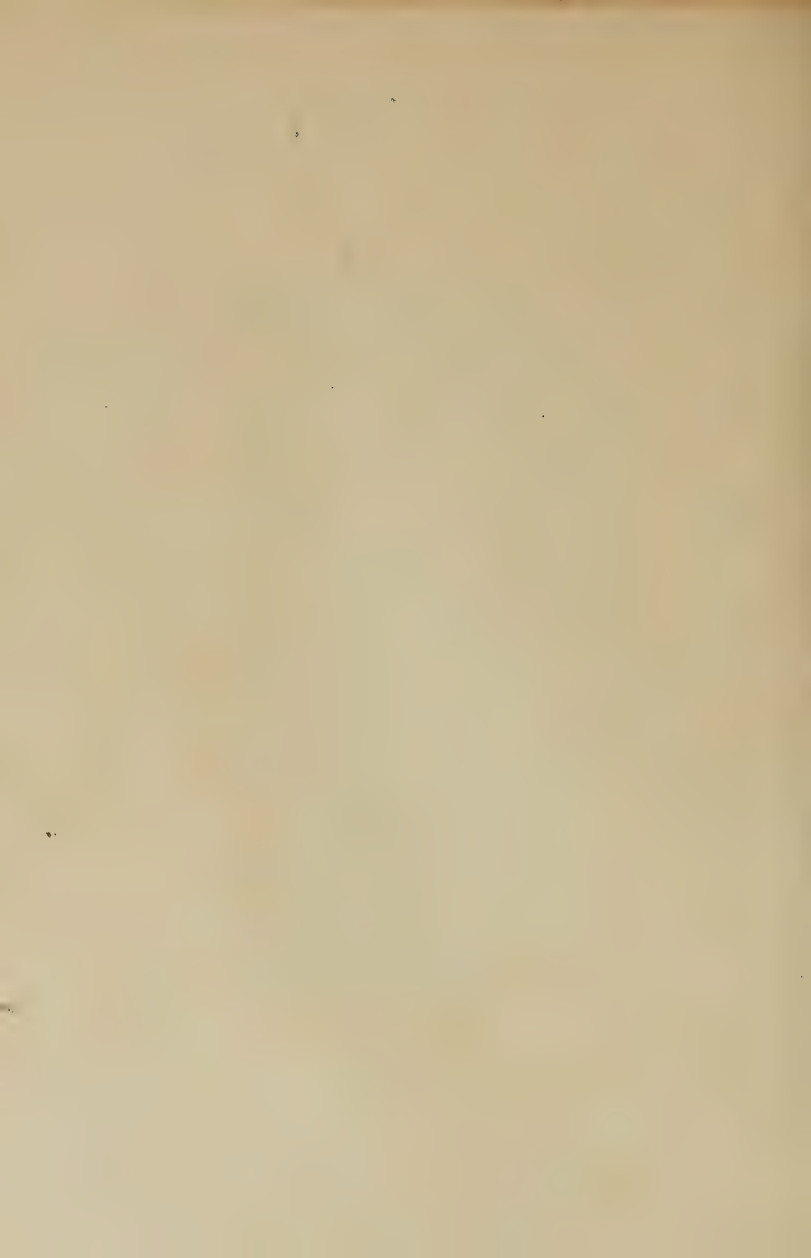
to the Society for this piece of ground for church purposes. This I did without consultation with anyone, knowing the importance to us of securing this site, and that there was no time to be lost. Besides, the people's hands were full. The site was cordially granted by the Court for the purposes specified. These were a sexton's house and, behind it, a large stable-yard. Hitherto our members driving in from the country had to put up in public-house yards here and there about the town. This was both inconvenient and unseemly. And so, very soon, even before the church work was finished, we commenced the erection of a neat and comfortable house for our sexton, and, behind it, a large, walled-in stable-yard, with stands for twenty-four horses on one side, and a wide, covered shed for vehicles along the other side. The whole was finished for about £540. This, of course, increased our church debt, but it was the last building we really needed, and it was urgently needed, was greatly appreciated, and served an excellent purpose.

Centenary Celebrations.

How were we to set about raising the needed money? As the Centenary of the



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AS ENLARGED IN 1892



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congregation was coming in 1896 (my semi-jubilee happened to fall in the same year), and as times then were very bad for raising money, it seemed best to rest for a couple of years, and then make the very most of our Centenary celebrations toward wiping out our debt. When the eventful year arrived, we found that we still owed £1,100, and the best and most generous members of both Session and Committee feared to undertake it, spoke of almost certain failure, and advised against attempting the impossible. But I had, meantime, many broad plans laid, some of them already in operation, and I only asked that all would help as they could, and that none would hinder or discourage the work. This was readily, though without much hope, agreed to.

I need not record in detail all the ways and means devised for getting help at home and abroad, but the main features were to centre our jubilee celebrations in one week in August, taking two Sabbaths. On the first of these Dr. John Hall, of New York, had kindly consented to preach. Special services and many collectors, morning and evening, were arranged for. On the second Sabbath the Rev. George Davidson, M.A., of Edinburgh, promised to preach, with

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similar arrangements about services and collectors. Then, in the intervening week, a grand two days bazaar was to be held in the Town Hall, at which all the Protestant denominations in town had graciously promised to give a generous helping hand. Dr. Hall kindly consented to open this bazaar, which proved a great social attraction and fair financial success. The *Chronicle* report of this jubilee week is so full and interesting, at least to Coleraine people, that we are tempted largely to reproduce it. For it surely reveals to us the heights of fervent enthusiasm and of noble self-sacrifice to which a comparatively plain people may on occasion rise. It demonstrates, too, as what else could, the happy, healthy, helpful spirit of harmony and goodwill pervading the entire community.

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CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

THE present week and the next two days will be memorable in the history of the congregation of Terrace Row Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, which this year celebrates its centenary, as well as the semi-jubilee of

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the present energetic and devoted pastor, Rev. R. B. Wylie, LL.D. That some special notice should be taken of such events was only to be expected, and no more appropriate, substantial, or useful means could have been employed than the laudable effort to clear off debt in which the congregation is at present heartily engaged, with the generous assistance of the congregations of the Coleraine Parish Church and the two sister Presbyterian Churches in town, each of these having joined in the bazaar proceedings (noticed below) in a manner which proves—if proof were required—that the various religious organisations in Coleraine are working together in complete harmony. The centenary celebrations included special services on two Sabbaths (9th and 16th August), a bazaar on Tuesday and Wednesday last in the Town Hall, a conversazione on Thursday evening, and a lecture by Rev. George Davidson, B.Sc., Edinburgh, on Monday evening next. In addition, there have been congregational efforts to reduce the debt of £1,100 which remained upon the extensive church property, but as these have already been noticed in our columns, we need not enlarge upon the subject. The week has been one of solid, united work in a good cause, and it will be only the due reward of Dr. Wylie and his people if, when all results have been reckoned up, the congregation opens its second century quite free from financial obligations.

SPECIAL SERVICES.

The first two of the special services were held on Sabbath last, the preacher both morning and evening being the celebrated Rev. John Hall, D.D., of New York. At the morning service the sacred edifice was well filled in every part, many strangers, including American and other visitors to the adjoining watering-

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places, being present, with a large number of members of other churches in town. Rev. Dr. Hall, having conducted appropriate devotional exercises, preached from Acts xvi., 4, 5—"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." The sermon, like all the popular divine's utterances, was simple, yet eloquent, effective, and impressive. He impressed the importance of brethren dwelling together in unity. There should be hearty co-operation and mutual regard for each other, in order that the truth of Christ may be exalted and religion advanced throughout the world. In the land from which he came, it was a privilege which he sometimes enjoyed of preaching in the pulpits of the other three great denominations in the land, and of having their ministers preaching from his own pulpit; and he was persuaded that spiritual and moral good resulted from the interchange. He was now speaking to not a few who were not members of Terrace Row congregation, and who were not even members of the particular denomination to which it belonged. They had an opportunity given them that day of exhibiting practical sympathy, to encourage their brethren, to strengthen their hands, to show to the community outside that although they had differences of form, they had one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one great mission to serve, and one great cause to sustain in the world. According to his observations on both sides of the Atlantic, Presbyterians were among the most generous contributors to benevolent and Christian causes outside their own denomination, and he did not hesitate to ask that those present would that day practically and generously strengthen

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the hands and encourage the hearts of those who were stately worshipping in that place in their endeavour to free themselves from the burden of debt, so that the church might be untrammelled and ready to prosecute the good work which it had been doing in the years gone by. It was impossible to look over those graceful buildings, those appropriate arrangements for worship, without seeing that a good use had been made of the £6,000 which had been already expended; and when the remaining £1,000 had been lifted off he had no doubt there would be consolation and encouragement and added strength to the people worshipping there, to the pastor, and to the officers co-operating with him. Proceeding, Dr. Hall urged the necessity of each individual Christian doing something to bring others under the sway of the Divine life. As a native of Ulster, and brought up in the Church which was strong in this province, and having been for years a minister in its pulpits, his mind very often went back to it. During the last eight years they had been taking pains to show the American people to what a large extent the United States had been benefited by the people who went out—the Scotch-Irish they had come to be called—from that province of Ulster, many of them poor, many of them unequal to the hard struggle, but strong in this—that the truth of the living God was planted in their minds; they were established in the faith: and what was the result? He thought it was not too much to say that there was no other nationality that had contributed so much to the making of the Christian character of the United States as had his co-religionists—their brethren in blood and in faith—who had gone out from Ulster and made their homes in what they now called the United States. What a power there was

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in the systematic, faithful teaching of God's holy truth to the children of men! And so when they sustained the Church, when they strengthened its hands, when they used their means to increase its power, they were doing good upon the highest plan of benevolence. The young men and maidens he urged to be diligent students of their Bibles, that they might receive the truth, and that they might hold it forth, so that others might be blessed spiritually and eternally through their interference. In order to do good to their fellow-creatures they must be meek and lowly, gentle and patient, unselfish and generous; they must be consistent and faithful, even unto death. Let the glorious light of the gospel shine through them and bring illumination to those that are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Believers should bear in mind that their Father in Heaven spoke to them and said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," that the beauties of holiness may be seen in their lives, and their fellow-creatures may be attracted to the Saviour who had rescued and sanctified them. In conclusion, Dr. Hall again urged the claims of Terrace Row congregation, which, for a century, had been doing a good work in the town; and of Dr. Wylie, who had given twenty-five years' energetic service for the Master in the congregation. By aiding to free the congregation of debt, they would minister consolation, strengthen hopes, and cheer the hearts of a body of God's people, and increase the power for good of the congregation.

The evening service was attended by a very large congregation, the church being filled in every pew. Rev. Dr. Hall preached from Romans i., 7—"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." His sermon was a masterly exposition of the gospels in general, the attributes of the various apostolic

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writers being brought out in sentences which were rich in beauty and true eloquence. In closing, he repeated his request of the morning, that those present should assist the minister and people of Terrace Row in their present effort. He hoped and trusted that what they did they would not merely do earnestly, and in pure true benevolence, but with a single eye to the glory of God.

The total collections, morning and evening, amounted to almost £60.

THE CENTENARY BAZAAR.

This was, as we have said, a "big week" in the annals of Terrace Row congregation, and doubtless the ladies of the flock will agree with us in stating that the bazaar was the leading feature of it. Certainly they had a lot to do in making the necessary preparations, and had they not received most encouraging aid from their sisters of St. Patrick's Church, and of First Coleraine and New Row congregations, the task which they had set themselves, largely influenced by devotion to their pastor, would probably have proved too much for them. It is now nineteen years since Terrace Row people asked the public to assist them in a bazaar, which they then did with heartiness. In the interval, the Terrace Row ladies have lent their aid to various other organisations in town, and the compliment was returned this week in a degree which confirmed the brotherly sentiments expressed by Rev. Mr. Moore and Rev. Dr. Wylie at the Hon. the Irish Society's *dejeuner* some days previously. All the ladies worked with energy, not only on the two days of the bazaar (Tuesday and Wednesday last), but a glance at the contents of the various stalls showed that their labours

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must have been in progress for months previously. Regarding the stalls, we shrink from the task of differentiating. In each and all, the tints, like the modes, were artistically designed and tellingly varied. No two were in the remotest sense alike: rather a remarkable circumstance when it is remembered that all were erected in a very brief period on Monday evening, without previously-prepared "plan or specification." The visitors had not much time to contemplate the stalls once the real business of the bazaar was entered upon. The proceedings were, on the whole, favoured with suitable weather, so the visitors had no discomfort to suffer in going to or returning from the attractive scene of operations. When the opening ceremonial was observed on Tuesday, at noon, there was a fairly large assemblage, all denominations in town being represented.

On the motion of Rev. Dr. Wylie, seconded by Rev. W. A. Wilson, M.A., the chair was taken by Mr. T. G. Houston, M.A., Principal of the Coleraine Academical Institution, who briefly introduced the proceedings and called upon

Rev. A. J. Moore, M.A., rector of Coleraine, who read a portion of Exodus xxxv., after which Rev. J. B. Armour, Ballymoney, led in prayer.

The Chairman said the people of Terrace Row had been fortunate enough to secure the services of a very distinguished and very eminent Irishman—(applause)—to open the bazaar. A good many of them were already, perhaps, acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Hall. (Applause.) He himself remembered hearing him often when he (the Chairman) was a student, long ago, and he was very much pleased to see him in the pulpit last Sunday, after something like thirty years of an interval, and to find him apparently in full vigour.

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(Hear, hear.) A great many people in Ireland would be glad to see Dr. Hall in such vigorous health. The Chairman concluded by introducing

Rev. Dr. Hall, who said he knew how anxious the ladies who had been at work preparing for the bazaar were to proceed to business, and so he would not preach a sermon nor take up very much of their time, but simply speak a few words in a conversational manner to them all. It had been a great pleasure to him to pay his present visit to Coleraine, and to renew his acquaintance with so many kind and good friends. In some instances they had been good enough to speak to him and recall their names where he, unhappily, did not remember them, for the reason, which they could all understand, that when one was away from a place for nearly thirty years, and was very much occupied with other thoughts and concerns, it was difficult to recollect the personal characteristics of everyone who was known in former times. Especially was it so when one whom he had known in happy boyhood had now grown whiskers and a very prominent moustache—(laughter)—and in some instance where hair had been black, had turned to be gray and venerable. He was very glad also to be at the opening of that bazaar, and he hoped the purpose which they had in their minds in carrying out the undertaking would be eminently successful. (Hear, hear.) There was a text which spoke about "owing no man anything, but to love one another," and as his dear friends there were engaged in an undertaking which contemplated the destruction of a little burden of debt, he hoped they would be successful in that effort. In that they were showing that they loved one another, for he was glad to know that in that effort it was not only the people of one congregation or of one denomination

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who were engaged in it, but the people of various denominations in the town and neighbourhood, happily associated together in the doing of the good work. That, he believed, was a very important element in the Christian life. They had had in London a few weeks ago the jubilee of the Evangelical Alliance, members of it aiming at coming together, co-operating, and showing the real unity that was in the hearts and lives of all true Christian people. He was glad to know that in the undertaking they were a little evangelical alliance, and there were many giving assistance in that work who were not committed in ordinary life to the arrangements or details of any particular denomination. He believed in that Christian unity, and in the hearty co-operation of all Christian people, even if they did not bear the same name or worship in any one particular form. Perhaps they might suppose that he had not any strong convictions himself, but he did not want to leave them under that impression. He thoroughly believed in principle, but he assured them it did not in the least degree interfere with his hearty appreciation of fraternal correspondence and co-operation among all those who knew and loved and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a great interest in everything that was intended to serve the purposes of the Church, and he was glad to think that they were engaged in that work at that particular time. They had a great many organisations and associations which were intended to promote the good of their fellow-creatures, or to relieve them in their distress, but he would like to add his impression that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the cheapest and best and most effective agency in the world for elevating their fellow-creatures to happiness, not only in this life, but in the life to come. He was a High Churchman, not

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merely in the sense of being over six feet in height—(laughter)—but in the sense of having the highest idea of what the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is. They had agencies and organisations which dealt with the symptoms of moral disease, but the Church, in setting forth the glorious Gospel, went to the root of the matter. It had a correct diagnosis of the case, and it came with the promise—"A new heart will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you"; and when human souls came to the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting and believing in Him, being new creatures in Him, then was the best basis laid for a true ethical life, for pure morality, for industry, for diligence, for patriotism, for everything that made them useful in the world. That was his idea of High Churchism. Therefore, he was pleased to know that they were toiling in the direction of helping the Church of the Lord Jesus. He said "toiling," because he knew that many of them had had a good deal of work in the matter. He had a great respect for the needle. (Hear, hear.) Should he tell them why? He went to college when he had reached the age of thirteen years, and sometimes a button would come off—(laughter)—as college boys got along in various ways—(renewed laughter)—and his trouble was how to get the button on. His efforts with the needle were, he assured them, very difficult, and not always very successful. (Laughter.) Then, when he became a minister, and was sent out to the West of Ireland, he had the needle constantly before him. It was in the days of the famine, and he had to deal with five or six schools or classes, intended for poor young girls who were taught to do sewed muslin work. It was his duty to impart to them religious instruction; and even now, in connection with the church of which he was the

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pastor, there were sewing schools at which a thousand girls attended and were taught the various forms of needlework by the ladies of the congregation and their friends, combined with religious exercises. Proceeding, the rev. doctor said he was glad to see the ladies standing shoulder to shoulder—although he had heard a lady say it was very difficult for them to stand shoulder to shoulder now-a-days in consequence of the way in which their dresses were made—(laughter)—to carry out the work which they had taken in hand, and he believed it would be successfully carried out. The congregation on behalf of which they were working was one hundred years old. They often thought of the necessity of helping the aged, but it was not in that sense that the congregation required to be helped—(laughter)—for he thought it was stronger than ever before; but they were to aid in lifting up the little burden of debt which rested upon it. They had working in the congregation his young friend the minister—he said his young friend, for he still seemed to be so. (Applause.) He did not know whether it was because the congregation took such good care of him, or whether it was because his (Dr. Hall's) former parishioner (Mrs. Wylie) took such good care of him—(applause)—he still seemed quite a young man, having served Terrace Row congregation for a quarter of a century. His heart would be encouraged, and his hands strengthened by the success which he (Dr. Hall) trusted the blessing of God would give to them in the undertaking which they had now in their hands. (Applause.) Concluding, Dr. Hall said—What we do we are not doing for ourselves, nor even for our fellow-creatures in the Lord's cause. We are doing it for Christ's sake—

“The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ the Lord.”

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He bought the Church with His precious blood. We look to Him and trust Him, as Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King. He is our Master, our Redeemer, our Leader, the Captain of our salvation; and what we do, in whatever shape or form, as Christians, we are to do for His sake, and as to Him—and the day will come when He will say, “You have done it unto the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.” May God bless you in your work, and realise your hopes and expectations in connection with this undertaking! (Applause.)

Rev. Dr. Wylie said it was now his pleasing duty to propose that their best and most hearty thanks be given to Dr. Hall for his great kindness in coming to them that day, for the encouraging words he had spoken to them, and the very helpful services which he had rendered them. Dr. Hall had come to them out of the very midst of his holidays, leaving his friends and relations behind, and depriving himself of the many opportunities of enjoyment which he so well deserved. They very cordially appreciated the great honour which in coming he had conferred upon them and the signal services he had rendered them. (Applause.)

Mr. W. J. Baxter said he had much pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks which had been so appropriately proposed by Dr. Wylie. Not only the eloquent and impressive services of last Sabbath, but his presence there that morning had placed the congregation of Terrace Row under a double debt of obligation. They were but links in the chain of generous acts which had made the name of Dr. Hall beloved and honoured throughout the Christian world. (Applause.) He had shown in a practical way that

“The charities that soothe and heal and bless
Are scattered at the feet of men like flowers.”

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He (Mr. Baxter) trusted that his own ministerial success—ministering as he did to the first Presbyterian congregation of the new world, was but an augury of the successful issue of that bazaar which he had now so gracefully opened. (Applause.)

The vote was heartily passed, and conveyed in graceful terms by the Chairman, who said they thanked Dr. Hall not merely for the distinction which his presence had conferred upon their enterprise, but for his noble and beautiful utterances, which he hoped and believed would prove an inspiration in the hearts of both buyers and sellers. (Applause.)

Dr. Hall, in reply, said he appreciated very heartily their goodwill, but he thought they over-rated the services which he had tried to render. ("No, no.") He had been greatly troubled on several occasions during this summer by the extremely strong language of praise which had been given to him publicly. Whatever good had been done, whatever influence had been exerted for good, was due to the grace of their Heavenly Father. There was, undoubtedly, some little temptation to think too much of laudatory words, kindly spoken. Some English author had described a young lady who was in the habit of giving to her friends a long list of her own personal excellencies and virtues, and then one day she brought the climax by adding the remark: "But I'm not a bit proud, because *ma* says that would be sinful." (Loud laughter.)

Rev. Dr. Wylie said that everyone present would be deeply grateful to Mr. Houston for his great kindness in coming to occupy the chair. When they obtained his consent they were perfectly satisfied that the duties of the position would be discharged with the utmost dignity and decorum. (Applause.)

The Chairman said he was very much obliged for

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the kindness shown him. Dr. Hall had scarcely done himself justice in merely claiming to be High Church—he might also claim to be particularly Broad Church. (Hear, hear and laughter.) It was to that latter body that he (the Chairman) had unfortunately only one claim—and that not the physical one—to belong, because nothing gave him more pleasure in Coleraine than to see a large number of people of all denominations met heartily together to make an effort on behalf of such an object as they had now on hand. (Hear, hear.) Having remarked that Terrace Row congregation had been in existence for a hundred years, he said that fact recalled to his mind an incident which ought to be recorded. The Bishop of Derry, one hundred years ago, was the somewhat eccentric but kindly-intentioned Earl of Bristol. One day he was walking in the neighbourhood of Bellarena, with the owner of the soil, a gentleman who belonged to a Derry family distinguished for their benevolence, Mr. Marcus Gage. The two gentlemen came upon a body of Roman Catholics, who were celebrating the rites of their religion in the open air. The Bishop, turning to Mr. Gage, said that these people ought to have a church in which to worship. Owing to the penal laws then in force, neither could Roman Catholics build a church for themselves nor might anyone else build a church for them. Mr. Gage, consequently, could not imagine how it could be done. At length the Bishop said, "If you give me a piece of ground I will see that they have a church." Mr. Gage complied, and a new church was erected, into which the Bishop transferred the adherents of the old Protestant church, leaving the Catholics to take possession of the latter building, which they did. (Applause.) Every church in Coleraine, Protestant and Catholic, had been

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going on improving since he (the Chairman) first had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with the town, now over twenty-five years ago. They had helped each other ; and if he were asked to name a characteristic of the Coleraine people he would say that they were distinguished for their readiness to stand shoulder to shoulder to assist any deserving organisation in the town or neighbourhood. They often heard the exclamation, "Oh, I'm sick of bazaars !" but when the time for a bazaar came round it was wonderful how they could throw off their indisposition, and how one bazaar after another had proved thoroughly successful. (Hear, hear.) He trusted the bazaar in which they were engaged, on behalf of Terrace Row, would be as successful as any of them. (Applause.)

Sales were then proceeded with.

One of the most interesting and instructive adjuncts to the bazaar was the "Malagasy Exhibition," conducted with rare tact and ability by Mrs. Moss, Springmount, Coleraine, in the board-room of the Town Hall. During a lengthened residence in Madagascar, Mrs. Moss's keen faculties of observation were used with effect, and her amiable desire to impart information came as a real help to Dr. Wylie and his coadjutors in the working of their undertaking. She is gifted with excellent descriptive powers, and addressed various large audiences during the days of the bazaar in an easy, conversational style, which greatly enhanced their enjoyment of the exhibition. The manners and customs of the Malagasy were described minutely, with their resources and manufactures. Numerous specimens of the latter received close attention from the audiences, many of those present expressing astonishment at the intricate beauties of the handicraft displayed in various articles of adornment or utility.

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One of the most valued items in the extensive collection was a shawl or mantle intended for use on State occasions, made up by the Queen of Madagascar, and presented to Mrs. Moss before leaving the island. Did space permit, we might enumerate many proofs of ingenuity and talent in design shown in the collection, one being a linen sheet which, after manufacture by Manchester tradesmen, was taken to threads and remade up by the Malagasy, who removed the "sizing" used in the English manufacture, and converted the sheet into a material which might easily be mistaken for cashmere. Mrs. Moss gave interesting details of mission work in Madagascar, many of which had come under her personal observation.

CONVERSAZIONE.

The Town Hall was on Thursday evening again the scene of a very attractive function, consisting of a conversazione and "promenade," the speciality in the bill of fare being vocal and instrumental music of an exceptionally high order. Various choice additions had been made to the decoration of the hall, which looked its very best under the new "sunlights." Fragrant flowers, sweet music, and agreeable companionships made the hours pass all too quickly, and all visitors present agreed, when bidding their adieu, that they had enjoyed a "good time" with the ladies and gentlemen of Terrace Row. This is by no means surprising, when we state that the list of amateurs contributing to the programme included Mrs. Mellor, Manor House; Miss Burton, Dublin; Miss Innes, Coleraine; Miss Johnston, Holywood; Miss Macey, Coleraine; Miss Edith Smyly, Garvagh; Messrs. D. Innes, Jun., Coleraine, and W. J. Thompson, Cole-

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rairie. The local ladies and gentlemen on the list could not stand higher in popular favour, and the others who so graciously lent their services at once secured the sympathies of a very large and discriminating audience, particularly Miss Burton, whose humorous vocalism was a refreshing novelty from a lady singer.

Rev. Dr. Wylie presided, and, in introducing the programme, expressed the hope that the evening would be a very pleasant wind-up to their bazaar, especially to the workers who had been labouring so very hard—some even for weeks and months past. He should like that meeting to be a kind of social “free-and-easy,” as, indeed, he thought it was. He then, in well-chosen language, expressed his obligations to all who had contributed to the success of the bazaar, particularly those from the other churches and denominations. (Applause.) Words, he said, could not express his gratitude for and appreciation of the services rendered—they had been so absolutely unstinted, so hearty, thorough, and self-sacrificing. (Applause.)

Now it must be acknowledged that in the matter of the bazaar we lapsed from the high ideal we had followed, for years before and after these celebrations, of “paying our own way,” but times were hard, our burden was heavy, and, while I was personally responsible for all the ways and means employed at this time for raising funds—both the bazaar and the special services—I confess that I resorted to these means somewhat unwillingly, and I did it

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in the hope of relieving our own over-taxed people by getting as much outside help as possible. While the help received was not so substantial as we hoped for, this, perhaps, was only natural, for we were no longer the poor, struggling, ill-equipped third congregation we once were. By our persistent efforts during years, we had now manse, school buildings, an enlarged and beautiful church, with extra outside accommodation. Thus we had risen to the front rank, with the best-equipped congregation in town, so far as church buildings were concerned. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that practical sympathy and help did not flow to us so freely as on a former occasion. Friendship and goodwill were still accorded to us ; but, when all our efforts were over and our accounts closed, we were still £330 short of our goal.

XIX

FINAL DEBT EXTINCTION EFFORT

What was now to be done to clear off all debt before the expiration of our jubilee ? There was nothing for it, that I could see, but still another subscription list amongst ourselves. While I was truly sorry that this should be necessary just then, in our exhausted state, yet it was quite pleasantly agreed to by the people, who seemed ready for any sacrifice. Envelopes were distributed for money or promises, these not to be opened until the evening of our social meeting, near the end of the year. Again I learnt this lesson—that the more people give, the more they seem to be both able and willing to give.

The climax of our Centenary year was to come at the jubilee Social Meeting on 15th December.

When the interesting date arrived and an eager throng had assembled to see the

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envelopes opened, it was found that, of the £330 needed, only £48 remained unsubscribed. As the meeting went on the sum of £13 was handed in, leaving only £35 to be raised. Near the close of the proceedings a member, Mr. John Morrow, suggested that we should not separate until this little balance was wiped out, and to this end offered an additional subscription, then another and another were openly announced. The desire to give became infectious, and lasted until the needed sum and a little over was subscribed. Our great debt of £1,100 was gone within the year. The enthusiasm was unbounded !

I offer no apology for giving large extracts from the *Chronicle* report of this memorable meeting. The meeting itself put the crown on all our efforts at debt extinction, and sounded the final and triumphant note of our jubilee celebrations. The report of the *Chronicle* does justice to the occasion by bringing out the true character and quality of the congregation—their wonderful unity and whole-hearted devotion under the most trying circumstances. It was these qualities, coupled with untiring zeal and enthusiasm, that carried us successfully over the most formidable difficulties.

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CENTENARY OF THE CONGREGATION AND SEMI-JUBILEE OF DR. WYLIE'S MINISTRY.

ON Tuesday evening last a most enthusiastic social meeting of the members of Terrace Row Presbyterian Church was held in the lecture-hall to celebrate the centenary of the congregation and the semi-jubilee of the ministry of the beloved and energetic pastor, Rev. R. B. Wylie, LL.D., to whom a beautiful Congratulatory Address was presented on the occasion. Everyone is aware of the movement which was this year taken up by the congregation and its pastor in order to clear off a debt of £1,100, the balance of the expenditure upon the extensive buildings which the congregation had carried out. A series of vigorous efforts, continuing throughout the greater part of the year, had the effect of reducing the debt to £330, and the congregation resolved in a spirited manner to deal with the remainder, contributions being made and sent in in envelopes which, as arranged, were to be opened on the evening of the soiree. The result proved most gratifying, £281 odd being raised, which left the balance about £49; and the most magnificent and satisfactory fact in connection with the whole movement is that, before separating on Tuesday evening, this balance was completely wiped out by the congregation, which, with its clever pastor, is now to be congratulated as standing completely free of debt, and the greatest possible enthusiasm was manifested upon Dr. Wylie making the gratifying announcement. The congregation was splendidly represented on the occasion, and when it is said that this was one of the most enjoyable social meetings ever held in that

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school-room, it may be pretty well understood what success attended the efforts of the promoters. The hall itself had been specially looked after by skilful decorators, and the effect was eminently creditable. Perhaps one of the most notable features in this connection was the placing round the room of mottoes bearing the names of the four ministers who have laboured in Terrace Row since the founding of the congregation 100 years ago, with the date of each settlement. These had the names and dates as follows: "Rev. James Hunter—1796"; "Rev. Doctor Magill—1840"; "Rev. Joseph MacDonnell—1847"; "Rev. Doctor Wylie—1871—semi-jubilee." The address—beautifully framed and illuminated—was conspicuous at the back of the platform, and above it was the motto, "Centenary—1896—Forward!" Both were beautifully draped, as were the four walls of the building, and tasteful decorations of evergreens, and the hanging of pictures and flags, completed an appearance in the hall which was at once pleasing and attractive. The programme proved most enjoyable and at the same time instructive, the addresses being listened to in every instance with the greatest interest. The two speakers who had come from a distance to congratulate Dr. Wylie and his people (Rev. William Park, Belfast, and Rev. D. A. Taylor, Comber), were well and favourably known before, but their addresses on Tuesday night will leave fresher and even more favourable memories behind them—their eloquence, and especially their pleasant reminiscences of their early companionship with Dr. Wylie, being received with the greatest enthusiasm by the large audience.

The tea being over, the audience joined in singing the opening verses of the 103rd Psalm, after which Dr. Wylie expressed the pleasure he felt at seeing

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such a large representation of the congregation present, and said he supposed they were all aware of the fact that the envelopes containing the subscriptions to the debt extinction fund had just been opened. He expected they were all waiting with breathless interest to hear the amount of the contributions received. He need hardly state to them that before the jubilee celebrations in the summer they wanted a total of £1,100 to clear away the debt on the congregation. After sending out their last appeal £330 was wanted, and now, after counting the contents of the envelopes sent in, they found these amounted to £281 some odd shillings, so that they still wanted £48 in order that the debt might be entirely cleared. He then referred to a meeting which had recently been held in Belfast to raise funds for the building of a new hospital, and, while speeches were being made, large contributions were subscribed by those present towards the object, and announced by the Lord Mayor, who presided. He (Dr. Wylie) would indeed be very happy to make the announcement of subscriptions towards the clearing away of the balance of this debt sent in while the speeches which were to follow were being made. (Laughter and applause.)

The choir was then called upon, and contributed the sacred piece, "We've sighted the golden gate," after which

Mr. D. Cunningham said that, without meaning any discourtesy to the present Chairman (Dr. Wylie), he would now move that he vacate the chair, and that it be taken by Mr. C. M. Loughridge. (Applause.)

Mr. Loughridge, who was warmly received, said they were met that night, as they all knew, under circumstances which were exceptionally interesting—for as a congregation they were 100 years old. As

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they looked back upon that long line of years they could only say that they had good cause to be thankful when they thought of all that God had done for them, and for the many blessings they had received. When they thought of the small beginning, and what they were as a congregation that day, they could lift up their hearts in thankfulness to God, and to those who had been before them, for the success they had attained. Surely if ever a congregation could say it truthfully, they could say that "the lines had fallen to them in pleasant places"; and surely it could also be truthfully said, when they remembered the many faithful workers who had preceded them, "Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." Many men and women of the congregation who had gone before them had left pleasant memories behind them—they had won success and they had entered into their rest. He hoped that God might grant that those coming after them would look back upon their memory with as much pleasure as they that night did upon that of their predecessors. Having expressed the great delight with which he welcomed the presence of the Rev. Mr. Park (Belfast), whose name was received with loud applause, Mr. Loughridge proceeded to say that while they were there to celebrate the completion of 100 years—what he might call their century of progress—they were also there to commemorate the quarter-century. (Applause.) Dr. Wylie had come to them twenty-five years ago a young man—a boy. (Laughter.) He (Mr. Loughridge) was happy and delighted to say that in many respects he was still a boy—(applause and laughter)—and he hoped that if he lived to see his full jubilee that he would still have the young heart and kind affections peculiar to a boy. (Applause.) Twenty-five

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years ago they had taken him to their hearts—they had expected great things of him, and they were all now ready to tell him that they had not been disappointed. (Loud applause.) The more they knew of him the more they liked him. (Hear, hear.) Dr. Wylie, as a preacher, was a king among men. (Applause.) He had come among them, and they had received him with open hearts—and was it not a fact that Dr. Wylie could now turn them all round his little finger—(laughter)—and they were delighted with the process? (Renewed laughter and applause.) Upon this occasion they had felt that they must acknowledge their gratitude, but Dr. Wylie would not hear of any substantial recognition being proposed, for he said the congregation had given too liberally already. But the session and committee decided that they could not do less than present him with a suitable address, and he would now call upon their congregational secretary (Mr. W. J. Baxter) to read it. (Applause.)

Mr. Baxter, who met with a hearty reception, then read the address, after which Dr. Wylie feelingly read his reply.

Dr. Wylie, having concluded his formal reply, said—Mr. Chairman and friends, as you will easily understand, there is much that one would like to say on an occasion like the present that cannot be put into a reply to an address. I must not, however, occupy much of your time, and this will be the less necessary as I have already given you from the pulpit, and afterwards published, all the more interesting facts and events in the history of the congregation since its origin, 100 years ago. On an evening like this, as I look back and look around me, I cannot but realise afresh the many who are no longer with us—the old true friends with whom I began my ministry, and who

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helped me, no one but myself knows how much, just at the time when I most needed such help. The ravages of time are like the ravages of war. After the deadly conflict, when the muster roll is called of all who entered the fight, often but few survive to answer to their names, and although the thought of victory may help to cheer the survivors, still the sense of loss sustained in their dead comrades, and in their thinned ranks, must needs be sad and painful. So is it with us to-night. Were I to call over the roll of the session as I found it twenty-five years ago, of the twelve good and worthy men then on it, only four remain there to answer to their names; and of the thirty-four then on the committee, only eight are now with us; and of the 423 then on the communion roll, only ninety-three are left, and of these only about fifty are able to attend our services. But I ought not to sadden you with such facts and memories to-night. Let us rather think of the mercies we still enjoy. How the vacant places have been filled, how the numbers have kept up, and how the work has gone on in such changed circumstances, is matter at once for surprise and thankfulness—for some of the losses seemed, indeed, irreparable. Here is the other side. During my time, since 1871, we have received into communion 967 new members, or an average of thirty-seven every year for twenty-six years. Of these, 523 were young people, an average of twenty a year; and 444 by certificate, giving an average of seventeen each year. The total number of communicants now on the roll is about 500, or seventy-five more than at the beginning; and the usual attendance at communion now is about 350, as against 300 then. So that, in the face of all change and losses, I think we have reason to thank God and take courage. But

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the greatest wonder of all—to both ourselves and our neighbours—is how such a people, for there are none of us rich, have gone on throughout all these twenty-five years raising so much money. In addition to all our ordinary givings—which have gone on increasing till now they are almost three times what they were twenty-five years ago—(applause)—we have raised during these years almost £6,000 in connection with our church property alone. Now, a single great effort by a congregation in half a century can be easily understood, but to keep on at it year after year, through such times as these, for twenty-five years, tries the spirit and the devotion of any people ; and the minister of a people who have successfully stood that test has reason to be profoundly thankful, as I am to-night. Friends outside, who know the congregation and its history, have been continually asking me, “How do you get your people to go on giving as they do ?” To which I have answered, “We are able to do it because we are thoroughly united, and all do their part. A united hearty people can do anything”; or I have said, “Because we have no rich people for the others to rely upon—all take an active interest in the work. That is one secret of our success.” But there is another reason that I might have given, only modesty forbade me, and I think I’ll tell it to you to-night, as we are speaking freely. I might have said, “We are able to do it because my people are so fond of me, and have such confidence in me—(laughter)—that they would do anything in their power, and almost beyond their power, to gratify me.” (Hear, hear and applause.) That fact, which I have proved abundantly, from the first day until now, has really been a potent factor in all our successes. (Applause.) But I must close. The years

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have taken much from us—they have also brought us much blessing. May their lessons not be lost upon us. God has prospered us far beyond our deserts. Through long years of struggle and difficulty He has triumphantly brought us, and we are here to-night a large, united, happy congregation to praise Him. May all His mercies be as an appeal to us for our love and service. In view of all the way by which He has led us, and of the work we may yet be permitted to do, and of the rewards that await the faithful, may I say, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (Applause.)

The Chairman said some members of the congregation would likely wish to address the meeting.

Mr. W. J. Baxter said—Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to add something to what has been already said on this occasion. To do so will, I am confident, not be considered trespass on the part of one who has for the past twenty years acted as secretary of this congregation. (Applause.) It is obviously difficult to embody, except in a generic way, all one would like to express within the limits of an illuminated address. It is equally difficult to divest it of a certain degree of formality, which somehow attaches itself to the ceremony of presentation. Dr. Wylie's innate modesty, indeed, shrank from the ordeal. We persuaded him, however, to submit to it; but his whole life and teaching have been a constant testimony against every species of formality. We wish, therefore, to divest it of the very appearance of such, and that he will feel how true and real are the words we use to-night. (Applause.) Perhaps no one in the congregation has been more intimately associated with

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him in its work than myself. Twenty years' intercourse will test the qualities of most men. If there is base metal in them it is sure to reveal itself; and it is no recent discovery to us that Dr. Wylie has not only "the guinea stamp," but the true, clear ring of the real gold beneath. (Applause.) His wise pastoral guidance has been to me at once an education and an inspiration. One of those things which I most highly value is the enjoyment of his personal friendship—a friendship which has been uninterrupted through all these years. To know him was to esteem and trust him. His purity of motive, his clearness of judgment and tenacity of purpose, his organising skill and business capacity, with the consecration of all his talents so as to touch life in every phase and influence it for the highest good—these have placed him in the very first rank of the ministers of our General Assembly. (Loud applause.) It is a most fitting tribute to Dr. Wylie that we should have some of these with us to-night. The fact that they have been amongst the choice friends of his student days, and have themselves become a distinct power in the Church—sharing its highest honours and its weightiest responsibilities—only goes to prove what I have already said, and makes their presence specially appropriate. (Applause.) Mr. Park's presence, indeed, revives with myself the brightest memories, which can never be allowed to fade; and the congregation welcome most cordially with him Mr. Taylor on this occasion. (Applause.) It is not an ordinary one. It is the second time during my secretaryship in which we could face the world and say, "we are free from debt." (Applause.) These two occasions stand out like mountain peaks in our history. We stand on one of them to-night. (Applause.) We can look back with thankfulness on the path up

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which we have been toiling ; but we can also look forward with hope for a higher one, the bright outlines of which are already becoming visible. During these years no less than £6,000 has been expended in Terrace Row. Only £1,000 of this comes from outside sources. (Applause.) The other £5,000 has been raised by our own voluntary contributions and effort, and I think, when our numbers and means are taken into account, the fact is without parallel in the Assembly. (Applause.) This debt may be divided into two parts—the first, £3,600, covering manse, schools, etc., which was cleared off on the first occasion referred to ; and then the second part, £2,400, covering the enlargement of the church, sexton's house, lavatories, and stables. It is only fair to Dr. Wylie to say that whilst he was the means chiefly of helping us out of both debts, he was not responsible for incurring the second. The session and committee, on their own responsibility, deliberately resolved to enlarge the church ; that resolution was unanimously supported by the entire congregation at a specially enthusiastic meeting which was convened to consider it. Not till this deliberate action was taken, and the proposals made as to subscribing the funds, did Dr. Wylie touch the matter. Then he threw himself most energetically into the scheme, and we all know with what success. (Applause.) All the money he suggested to be given was promptly paid, the sum realised, with opening services, being over £1,100. To this the Hon. the Irish Society added £200. We then went forward to complete the sexton's house and stables. This left us £1,100 unpaid, and on which we have been paying interest. Now, when he mentioned to me the possibility of clearing this debt off during this centenary year, I freely confess I thought it unwise to make the attempt. Knowing

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what the congregation had just done (the last instalments of subscriptions had only two years ago been paid out), I felt that if an appeal were again responded to, it would be either a real sacrifice or a failure. But failure is not written in the annals of Terrace Row—(loud applause)—and instead of this the result has proved a memorable success—a real sacrifice of joy to us all. (Applause.) I have nothing but admiration for the way in which he launched this centenary scheme—how he met every difficulty, smoothed down hostility, and discovered for us, like another Columbus, the land of liberty in which we find ourselves. Of him it may be truly said, as Tennyson says of the Queen's statesmen :—

“Who at her council met ;

He knew the season when to take

Occasion by the hand and make

The bounds of freedom wider yet.”

(Applause.) A wider field for Christian work all this material expansion now furnishes us with. We shall be freer to engage in it. Hitherto we have been hampered by this financial pressure brought to bear against us. Now we are free from this, and I trust we shall be always so. (Applause.) Several years ago two friends made a fortnight's holiday tour in the Scottish Highlands. Visiting the Isle of Skye, they spent an hour at the north-west of the island to see the table-rock known as the “Quirang”—a large, level, table-like plateau, of say 200 feet diameter, surrounded by the solid rock, as if to guard its beauty. The peculiarity about this “Quirang” is that there is a perfect echo in it to any word you choose to speak. Struck with the appropriateness of the words to the scene, the friends amused themselves by repeating in measured tones Tell's famous address—

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"Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again,
I hold to you the hands ye first beheld,
To show they still are free";

and the echo responded clearly, "They still are free." And as they watched the billows of the Atlantic breaking at the rock's base and felt the fresh breezes blow across the spot, the friends called out to one another from the opposite ends of the "Quirang," where they had placed themselves—"Blow on, this is the land of liberty," and the refrain came circling back again distinctly, "This is the land of liberty." The friends referred to were Dr. Wylie and myself. (Applause.) The story is suggestive of the entire freedom from debt, which, I hope, this congregation will in the future enjoy. (Applause.) Dr. Wylie is now able to say in regard to it, "We still are free," and as he does so I trust, that from the circling years, as they roll onward, will come back the echo always, "We still are free." (Applause.) We are entering on a new era of congregational life. No better preparation for this could be made than the series of sermons which Dr. Wylie concluded on last Sabbath on the work and power of the Holy Spirit. Without Him we are truly weak, but with Him the higher pathway to which I have referred as already becoming visible, will become brighter. Let us pray earnestly for His presence with us. As a congregation we shall then go out with joy and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills shall break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree, and we shall be to the Lord for a name—an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (Loud applause.)

Mr. T. G. Houston, M.A., in the course of an eloquent

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and happy address, said he never in his life so earnestly wished for the power of making a speech as on that occasion. He wished the powers in that direction which Mr. Baxter had just displayed would come to him then. He believed he might claim that he had known Dr. Wylie longer than any member of his congregation, and when he heard the happy reference of Mr. Loughridge as to Dr. Wylie being a boy, his memory went back to the time when he (the Doctor) and himself had been really "boys together" in the early 'sixties, when they had been both at college. He would like to here pay a passing tribute to one who was also there then. He remembered in his young days how much they all thought of Mr. Park—(applause)—and he was so heartily glad to see him there at that meeting, looking strong and vigorous with all his great quarter-of-a-century's work behind him. (Applause.) Mr. Houston proceeded to say that in almost all undertakings in every sphere of life there were to be found three classes of individuals—the idlers, who never did anything but look on at the zeal and perseverance of others; the critics, who did nothing but criticise what others were doing; and then there were the workers, who benefited others by their actions. He believed no better specimen of the latter class of individual could be found than their pastor, Dr. Wylie. (Applause.) The secret of their success was no secret at all. It was simply because he was at the helm of affairs, and because he deserved to succeed. (Applause.) He had the magnetism by which all those who rallied round him were not only willing but glad to work under him. (Applause.) He need scarcely speak of Dr. Wylie's qualities as a friend. Those who knew him as such would not require anything to be said to remind them of his worth.

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(Applause.) When he (the speaker) had a great difficulty to surmount, Dr. Wylie's kind sympathy and help had borne him through, and he would never forget him for it. (Applause.) He felt rejoiced to see him there that night in youth and vigour. He always said when he saw a man in such condition, "That man must have a good wife"—(laughter)—and he believed they owed a good deal to Mrs. Wylie for what had been done by Dr. Wylie. (Hear, hear.) He thought, when wishing him a long and prosperous life, they should couple the name of his wife and children, and hope that they would live long to do much good in the world. (Applause.) When, in the years to come, those who came after them looked at the splendid buildings which had been erected in Dr. Wylie's time, they would say what a splendid monument he had left. But he would leave a more lasting monument in the minds and hearts of the people by the good he had done to those he had left behind him in Terrace Row. (Applause.)

Mr. W. J. Given, C.E., also addressed the meeting and gave some striking quotations from sermons by Dr. Wylie, which he had taken a note of at the time of their delivery.

Mr. J. M. Bamford, in the course of a brief address, said he was a young member of Terrace Row congregation—not as far as age was concerned—(laughter)—but in membership of the church. He came as a sort of religious outcast—(laughter)—and he had been taken in notwithstanding his bad reputation. (Laughter, and "No, no.") He had had the reputation of being rather advanced in his church views, and consequently was not a desirable member of church society. It was only right to say that Dr. Wylie did not offer any inducements to him to come, but rather wished that he

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should not leave the church he had been in ; but he came, and he was glad at it. He had found in Dr. Wylie a true friend, a preacher of the very first water, a clear thinker, and a forcible speaker. (Applause.) One thing he always admired in Dr. Wylie was that he was very decided in his opinions, and if he did not agree with anyone, he told them so. (Applause and laughter.) When he appeared on a public platform they were always proud of him—even when one was not a member of his congregation, they were proud of him as a representative of the Presbyterian Church. But if his congregation was proud of him, he should also be proud of them—(laughter)—and if they wanted to please him still better, the best way to do it was to raise the balance of £48 now remaining of the debt—(laughter)—and he hoped this amount would be subscribed before the meeting terminated. He hoped they might all live to see Dr. Wylie's real jubilee, and that they would then see him able to fill the position he now occupied in Terrace Row and in Coleraine, and to be out and in amongst them. (Applause.)

Mr. Loughridge then vacated the chair, which was resumed by Dr. Wylie, and the programme was proceeded with.

The Chairman called upon Mrs. T. B. Shannon, who was cordially greeted as she came forward to sing "Kathleen Mavourneen." This she did in the faultless manner which has earned her the enviable reputation which she enjoys. The accompaniment was played by Miss Irwin. Mr. W. Knox then treated the audience to a piece of recitation in a style which only a master of the art can imitate ; and this was followed by the sacred selection from the choir, "Come unto Me."

The Chairman expressed his regret that his brother

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(Rev. J. B. Wylie), who was to address the meeting, was unwell, and unable to be present. He was sure they too regretted his inability to be with them. The Chairman then, in a few well-chosen remarks, introduced

Rev. Mr. Park, who was received with enthusiasm, and who delivered a powerful and eloquent address, in the course of which he expressed his admiration of the congregation of Terrace Row for the manner in which they had set-to clearing the debt off the church, and his congratulations to Dr. Wylie upon his exertions in the same direction. The speaker referred in warmest terms to his friendly relations with Dr. Wylie, and said that at the General Assembly there was no one he was more pleased to listen to when speaking upon any subject. He very much regretted that he was not heard oftener in the Assembly, so great was his command over the audience. Rev. Mr. Park concluded his address by thanking the previous speakers who had made such kind allusion to him, and with the assurance that it gave him very great pleasure to be present and to take part in such a delightful congregational meeting as the present one. (Applause.)

An interval was here announced, and the audience was treated to a service of fruit.

Upon resuming the programme, all heard with delight the rendering of the solo, "Angels," by Miss Moss, Springmount, who is the possessor of a beautiful voice. The choir having again contributed a hymn,

The Chairman introduced Rev. D. A. Taylor (Comber), whom he characterised as one of his earliest and best friends.

Mr. Taylor was warmly received, and in the course of his remarks referred to the time of Dr. Wylie's ordination, at which time he (the speaker) had visited

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the town, when he admired its beautiful river and lovely surroundings, and had even envied Dr. Wylie in his settlement in such a locality. He also made interesting reference to the time when Dr. Wylie and he were at college. While there Dr. Wylie had always shown splendid ability as an organiser, and was always drawing up programmes for the filling in of spare time. In the carrying out of the great improvements which the congregation had effected in the church he (the speaker) was sure the members, as well as their minister, deserved a great deal of praise for the execution of the work accomplished ; for, to use a phrase of Burns's, Dr. Wylie's plans might have "gone aft' agley" had he not been heartily backed up by his people. (Laughter and applause.) The results of their united efforts were such, he believed, as enabled them to tell a story which could not perhaps be told by any other congregation in the whole Church. (Applause.)

A sacred solo, entitled "Faith," was contributed by Mr. J. B. Scott (Model School) in splendid voice, the accompanist being Mr. A. Woodburn.

The Chairman was proceeding to refer to the obligation which they were all under to the speakers and others who had taken part in the programme, when

Mr. John Morrow (Islandheaghey) said they should not proceed with the votes of thanks until something was done as to the raising of the balance of the debt, which was now only £35—(hear, hear and applause)—£13 having been already contributed since the opening of the envelopes. He thought they should try and raise the money before separating, and if this were done, he for one would be willing to assist. (Applause.)

The suggestion was heartily taken up, and in a few minutes Mr. D. Cunningham announced that the sum

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had been raised with £1 over, Dr. Wylie contributing the last £5. The audience manifested the greatest enthusiasm at the result.

Mr. W. Abraham, in moving the customary votes of thanks, said it afforded him great pleasure to take even the part of moving that the best thanks of the meeting be given to the speakers who had come from a distance, and who had told them of Dr. Wylie before the members of Terrace Row congregation had known him; also to the friends who had decorated the hall, to those who had presided at the tea tables, the stewards, and all those who had contributed to the programme. (Applause.)

Mrs. Moss seconded the motion in a neat little speech, which was loudly applauded.

The vote was heartily passed.

The Chairman then conveyed the vote of thanks, in the heartiest manner, to all helpers, more especially to Mr. Park and Mr. Taylor. As to the congregation, for what they had just done, he scarcely knew what to say. He had often felt thankful to them and proud of them, but never so proud and thankful as that night. At the beginning of this year to move at all in the direction of debt extinction seemed to most of them a hopeless thing. Again they had learnt the lesson that a united, hearty people can do anything. He felt humiliated, even pained, by the many extravagant things his too kind friends had said about him that evening. He trusted the effect would be to stimulate him to try and become a little more like the fancy pictures they had presented of him. He felt utterly unworthy of such praise.

The pleasant proceedings then concluded by the singing of the doxology and the pronouncing of the benediction.

XX

CHURCH WORK

But while so much of our thought and energy had been given to adding to and improving our church property, and to raising the necessary funds ; and while this part of our work naturally attracted most public attention, still it should be remembered that behind all this the proper Christian and social work of the congregation had been carried on steadily and successfully. Every department of work was well organised, with a responsible officer and a staff of helpers in charge.

The following extract from the Annual Report of 1895 is a fair indication of the different congregational agencies at work for many years :—

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CONGREGATION OF TERRACE ROW, COLERAINE.

MINISTER—REV. R. B. WYLIE, M.A., LL.D.

ELDERS—James Porter, John Millar, James Black, Wm. Nevin, John Lees, C. M. Loughridge, David Black, William Moore, and James Barr.

COMMITTEE—W. J. Baxter, Samuel Henry, Daniel Cunningham, John Morrow, David Love, Thomas Finlay, John M'Clatchie, J. S. B. Curry, W. J. Given, Daniel Gray, John Rankin, George Gilmore, John Clarke, John Ferguson, J. M. Bamford, Jos. Lyons, James Semple, Thomas G. Lynd, William Henry, H. A. Stuart.

C. M. LOUGHRIDGE, Clerk of Session.

W. J. BAXTER, Secretary of Congregation.

BELFAST BANK, Treasurer for do.

The congregation is divided into Thirteen Districts, with an Elder, a Member of Committee, and a Sustentation Collector in charge of each.

<i>District.</i>		<i>Elder.</i>
1. Kiltinney	...	James Black
2. Gateside	...	—
3. Boghill	...	James Barr
4. Tullans	...	David Black
5. Loughan	...	—
6. Castleroe	...	William Moore
7. Ballinteer	...	John Lees
8. Ballycairn	...	James Porter
9. Killowen	...	—
10. Brook Street, etc.	...	W. Nevin
11. Commons, etc.	...	C. M. Loughridge
12. New Row, etc.	...	Do.
13. Meetinghouse St.	...	James Barr

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<i>Committee.</i>		<i>Susten. Collector.</i>
1. Joseph Lyons	...	Miss Anderson
2. J. S. B. Curry	...	Miss M'Neill
3. J. Morrow, Jun.	...	Miss Black
4. J. Clarke	...	Miss Black
5. ———	...	Miss Tosh
6. David Love	...	{ Miss Moody and Miss Moore
7. John Rankin	...	Miss Huston
8. T. Finlay	...	Miss Finlay
9. George Gilmore	...	{ Miss Laughlin and Miss A. O'Neill
10. Samuel Henry	...	Miss T. Irwin
11. Daniel Gray	...	Miss Barr
12. James Semple	...	Miss Matthews
13. D. Cunningham	...	{ Miss O'Neill and Miss B. Porter

Hours of Worship—12 o'clock noon, and 6 o'clock evening.

Central Prayer Meeting—Thursday evening at 8 o'clock.

Baptism on First Sabbath and First Thursday of each month.

Morning Sabbath-school at 10 o'clock—Mr. C. M. Loughridge, superintendent.

Evening Sabbath-school at 4 o'clock—Mr. W. J. Baxter, superintendent.

Young Men's Guild, Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock (November till March)—Mr. Geo. Lynn, secretary.

Young Women's Guild, Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock (November till March)—Miss Bessie Porter, secretary.

Temperance Union, Third Wednesday of each month, at 8 o'clock—Mr. D. Cunningham, secretary.

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Psalmody Practice, Friday evening at 8 o'clock—
Conductor, Mr. J. B. Scott, Model School.

Sustentation Fund (collected quarterly)—Miss T. M. Irwin, secretary ; Miss Laughlin, treasurer.

Orphan Society (collected annually)—Mr. J. M'Clatchie (Belfast Bank), secretary.

Connaught Schools and Orphanage (collected annually)—Miss O'Neill, Dunedin Terrace, secretary.

Zenana Mission—Mrs. Wylie, secretary.

Dorcas Society—Mrs. R. Hunter, secretary.

District Visitors' Union meets half-yearly—Dr. Wylie, convener.

Town Mission, Commons District—Miss Irwin, King's-gate Street, superintendent.

Town Mission, Killowen District—Miss T. Irwin, superintendent.

State of Religion.

A brief survey of the religious life and work of the congregation in the years leading up to our jubilee seems called for here.

The work of systematic district visitation and teaching in the homes of all non-churchgoers within our bounds in town and country had been going on steadily and successfully for twelve years, since 1884, with the most gratifying results. The workers varied in number from about thirty to sixty, a majority of them young women. No other agency seemed so natural, or proved so effective, in reaching and reclaiming those who had lapsed from church connection,

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and it was eminently helpful to the workers themselves. The members of session shared in this work. In the minutes of session I find such notes as these : "Session afterwards met with the district teachers and tract distributors, and held a most interesting conference"; again, "Meeting then adjourned and joined district teachers, when most encouraging reports were given of the work done in the several districts, especially those in town."

Our district Sabbath-schools and prayer meetings going on for years proved a distinct gain to the Christian life and character of the congregation.

Looking at our Christian life and work now (1896) as a whole, and comparing it with that of the earlier years of our congregational history, from all I can learn I fear we come far short now in the matter of "family religion," *i.e.*, of stated "family worship," and I fear also in the private study of the Word and prayer; although, indeed, the recently-formed Bible Reading Association, with its 250 members, is certainly hopeful. But in the matter of Christian activity, of practical benevolence and philanthropy, of Christian missions at home and abroad, and of temperance, I think there

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has been great and rapid progress during the century. Speaking generally, there is latterly, perhaps, less of the "letter" and rigid forms of religion, and more of the softening spirit and practical working out of it. This, briefly, seems to me a fair comparison of the state of religion in the congregation at the beginning and at the end of the century.

Women Workers.

I cannot close this record of a century of congregational life and work without a warm acknowledgment of the special services rendered by the noble succession of women—married and single—who were ever to the front, giving unstinted help and encouragement in every effort to advance. The courage and self-sacrifice, the patient and painstaking devotion of some of them in the different departments of irksome congregational work are beyond all praise. Unitedly and separately they wrought untiringly. In one case, when the congregation was hard pressed for funds, I read that the ladies raised £180. By sales of work and other combined efforts they raised, annually, the funds needed for the Zenana Mission, the Dorcas Society, the District Mission work,

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etc. They were generally a majority of the Sabbath-school teachers. A zealous band of them carried on for long years the heavy work of the Sustentation Fund. In the book-keeping and organizing work needed in connection with this fund, Miss Tillie Irwin, of Church Street, was a tower of strength ; in her devotion to Town Mission work, Miss Baxter specially excelled ; in her success in the infant Sabbath-school, Miss Ellen Irwin, of Clifton Terrace, had few equals ; and so on, all round, the women of the congregation were to the front. In quick and hearty response to every call, and in "patient continuance in well-doing," they should be remembered with honour and gratitude.

Appreciatory.

I quote the following paragraphs from a review and appeal addressed by me to the congregation on the Sunday before our centenary celebrations. I do so because some of these paragraphs express my considered estimate of the quality of the congregation after twenty-five years' experience. The last is part of an appeal to raise another £500 toward the Jubilee Debt-Extinction Fund. I regret my inability either to re-

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member or trace the author, or authoress, of the verses at the end :—

“I must here pause to say, what I most deeply feel, that never was any man more kindly and generously treated by any people than I have been by you, from the first day until now. I feel it will be all the greater shame for me if I ever fail to do my best to serve you ; and if I have been able in the past, in any measure, to do my duty by you, your unbroken trust and confidence and love have been my constant reward. You have followed my lead and gratified my wishes at every point, and from my heart I thank you to-day. My one regret is that some who have been my best friends, to whom I owe most, are no longer with us—‘they have gone from us for ever.’ May their memory and influence remain as a strength and stimulus to help us still. . . .”

“Now, understand, all this that I have told you of, since 1871, was special, *extra* work. While it was going on our usual givings to stipend, sustentation, missions, orphanage, etc., were also going on, and all increasing. I do not wish to boast, or to flatter you, but I do not believe there is another such record of long-continued, steady, united, generous effort in the whole General

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Assembly. We have gone on, step after step, in the most persistent and praiseworthy way, adding to our church property and transforming the old until, now, all is in perfect harmony—a credit to any people and an honour and a strength to the cause entrusted to our care. We have now, for the first time, all the buildings we really need. . . .”

“When I look into some old reports of twenty-five to thirty-five years ago, and see the scale of giving then adopted in the congregation, and compare it with our recent records, I can simply express wonder and thankfulness. In the midst of all our efforts we have grown stronger, larger, more united and loyal. God has been leading us on, and He will help us now to make this last effort, this jubilee thanksgiving, the crowning proof of our love and unity, of our devotion and thankfulness to Him as the Giver of all good. The cause is His; it is only entrusted for the time to us. . . .”

“Now, can this be done ? [raising of £500]. With love and devotion and a little jubilee enthusiasm in our hearts, I believe it can be—nay, I believe it will be done !

“I hope not one will be over-taxed. If all who are able generously and cheerfully do their part, no one need be oppressed.

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If there are some, and I know there are, who, in God's providence, are so circumstanced that they cannot help as they would like, let such neither murmur nor fret, but let them rather cheer the others on, as disabled soldiers cheer their comrades when charging the last stronghold of the enemy. Let us be ready for both trouble and sacrifice, that this effort may be crowned with success, and our jubilee made glad indeed. Let the spirit of God's ancient people in rebuilding the walls of the city which they loved actuate us, and, like them, we shall achieve a complete and glorious triumph over all difficulties,—'For the people had a mind to work.'"

"A hundred years of honourable history, of struggles and successes, of growth from less to more, appeal to us. Many true men and women who nobly helped us once have left us now and gone to their reward. But their spirits, still interested in the prosperity of this church which they loved and served, like a cloud of witnesses, hover over us and cheer us on. They seem to say to us that the more nobly and self-denyingly we do our part now, the more thankful we shall be soon. May the memories of the good and true—the fathers, mothers, brothers, friends—who have gone from us make their appeal

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to us to-day. May we, each and all, from the oldest to the youngest, from the richest to the poorest, loyally do our part, and encourage one another in the work. May every 'promissory form' be forthcoming on next Sabbath morning, and on it written the best possible proof we can honestly give of our gratitude to God for the past, and of our desire for the prosperity of this church for the future. Above all, let there be no murmuring or complaining, no jarring note to disturb the harmony and heartiness of this our jubilee effort. Let such thoughts as these inspire us :—

"A hundred years ! how many prayers ascended ;
How many songs of praise ;
How many services begun and ended,
Whose fruit will last always.

How many burdens, borne with patient toiling ;
How many gifts of love ;
How many souls, washed white from all sin soiling,
Now in the home above.

How many children, trained for God and glory,
Went forth to life's stern war,
Who followed faithfully the grand old story,
As youth's pure-rayed pole-star.

O, Terrace Row, look back to those departed—
Those worthy of their day ;
Prove your true kinship now, and, thankful-hearted,
Do as brave deeds as they.

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Yours is the self-same task, be yours their daring,
Their patience, effort, trust ;
Remember them who are Christ's glory sharing,
Whose bones repose in dust.

Remember yours are now the fight, the sorrow,
The struggle, trial, joy ;
The earnest effort for a grand to-morrow,
And well your powers employ.

'Quit you like men,' in this your generation,
Worthy of Christ your Lord ;
Labour and faint not, since a great salvation
Awaits you for reward.

Look forward then, and with undaunted spirit,
Gird you with God's own might ;
Show that your fathers' courage you inherit,
To work for truth and right.

Build up, build up the Church with emulation,
United, strong, and true ;
Sing loud to Him whose presence and salvation
Have done so much for you.

Christ calls you ! Forward still with strong
endeavour,
Not one to say Him 'nay';
The future lies before and beckons ever,—
'Prepare for the great day,'

When not one effort made for Christ and Heaven
Shall miss His sweet 'Well done,'
And to each faithful servant shall be given
To share His glorious throne."

XXI

END OF THE CENTURY

Here our century of history ends. A few notes further to close the story of my ministry.

The next extra call came from the General Assembly for a great Twentieth Century Fund, and to this fund we subscribed £250. This is how our thankfulness for God's goodness to us in the past century found expression.

Praise Service.

I may close with a brief account of the progress made in our praise service. As in most other churches of the time (1871), the singing was led by a precentor, placed in a box in front of the pulpit—a kind of second pulpit, a few feet lower than that of the minister. In the first few years of my ministry our precentor was a man named Morrison—a clean-shaven, middle-aged tailor—a most worthy man, with a strong voice, but

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strongly addicted to a certain narrow round of tunes. They went all right, the people knew them well and seemed to like them and to desire no other. The precentor's salary was £15 per annum.

After Mr. Morrison came a much younger man, Mr. Alex. Givens, of Castleroe, at the same salary. Soon there was a move made for a choir; but no, this was too great a change for the old people, wedded to the past, to accept without question. The younger people generally were in favour of a choir, and soon the opposition became feeble, and a choir was established. The precentor's box was removed, and a number of semi-circular seats erected in its stead. There was now a desire for a greater variety of tunes, and when the Revised Psalter came out and was, after some anxious questioning, adopted by our congregation in 1879, its new versions—all set to special music—supplied the choir with abundant new matter for praise. A paraphrase was now introduced occasionally at the close of the evening service in Terrace Row, but not for some years after at the morning diet of worship. However, by a slow educational process the praise service gradually broadened. The united evening services and occasional evangelistic meet-

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ings, where hymns, as well as paraphrases, were used, helped to leaven the minds of our people; also the use of hymns by the young people in our Sabbath-schools no doubt modified, unconsciously, the views of the older people. By the year 1909 I found, in going out and in amongst the members, a growing and timidly expressed desire for the use of hymns and instrumental aid in our worship. It was still a delicate subject to mention. Many members of both session and committee strongly disapproved; a few of them objected absolutely to such a change from the old order; others, timid and cautious, feared the congregation would not stand it. There was only one way that I could see of satisfactorily settling the matter. I could not, personally, take the responsibility of either going forward or holding back, in the circumstances. A public vote of the entire congregation, and this alone, would reveal where we stood, and what was wisest and best to do. So, on a certain Sabbath morning, without consulting with anyone, I announced that on the following Sabbath morning I would take their minds as to the introduction of hymns and instrumental aid in our worship, and requested those present to notify any absent ones, that

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we might have the fullest possible attendance. This announcement dropped like a bombshell on the unsuspecting audience. Many smiled, a few gasped, stiffened, and became indignant. But the die was cast. On the following Sabbath the church was full ; all the members seemed to be in their places, and many more or less excited and anxious.

Instead of a sermon that day, I explained at length the different stages at which, after long discussion, the Assembly had reached in this controversy,—all in the direction of larger liberty. The position then taken up by the Assembly was that when a congregation was practically unanimous, it should not be interfered with. I also stated frankly and fully my own convictions on the subject, and my belief that it would greatly interest and benefit our young people thus to enlarge and enrich our praise service. I invited everyone present, young and old, to vote as they felt, either for or against. Those who felt indifferent, if any, need not vote. The result was a practically unanimous vote in favour of the change. Out of a congregation of nearly seven hundred persons, only nineteen—five or six of them children obeying orders—voted against the proposition. After

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this public demonstration of the mind of the people the thorny question was settled. The few objectors soon fell into line, and the big new problem that now presented itself was how to get an organ ? I got a free hand in selecting a builder, made every possible inquiry, got plans and prices from various builders, and in the end decided in favour of Messrs. J. and J. Binns, of Leeds.

Now the question of raising money had again to be faced. The cost of the organ itself was to be £645. Additional expenses were involved in the introduction of water power, re-arrangement of the pulpit and several pews, provision of suitable chairs for the choir, etc., etc. I pleaded for a specially generous offering, reminded the people of what we had done in the past, assured them that this would be my last call, and I felt sure they would not fail. Promise slips were prepared and distributed, to be returned on the following Sabbath morning. Great interest, almost excitement, was felt as to the result. The collection was counted, and great was the relief and joy when I announced that £620 had been contributed at that single offering. The doxology was then heartily sung, and all went home happy, feeling that the organ was as good as paid for already.



THE CHURCH ORGAN

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It was a truly splendid and praiseworthy effort. Perhaps the most wonderful, considering the object, that had ever been achieved by that or any other such congregation. Of course the few objectors, on principle, gave nothing; but they must have been astounded at this practical proof of the value that others attached to this forward movement.

I need not dwell upon details. Soon the organ was built,—an extra fine instrument,—but the cost was heavy. Messrs. Binns' account, with extras ordered, came to £697 10s.; builders', plumbers', and painters' accounts, with furniture bills and smaller costs, made up a total of £914 9s. 3d. Against this we had congregational subscriptions of £654, and an Irish Society subscription of £100. Opening services by Dr. George Hanson, of Montreal, and an organ recital by Mr. Sawyer, organist of Elmwood Church, Belfast, with subscriptions sent in, yielded a total of £117 11s. 9d., thus leaving a debit balance of only a little over £40. It was a magnificent crowning effort, and stood becomingly at the head of the long series in which we had been engaged for forty years. I felt more than satisfied; I felt proud and thankful that such a cause,

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in such a congregation, should have been carried in perfect harmony, and almost with perfect unanimity, to such a triumphant conclusion.

It was a great joy and a soul-refreshing experience to the vast majority of our people, and especially to the younger section, to have the organ and hymns added to our praise service. Of course we never dropped nor depreciated the ever precious Psalms. But for the children's part of the service, with the sweet and simple "Hymns for the Young," it was a new and glad experience, and greatly increased both the interest and the attendance of the children at the usual morning service.

Thus aided, the interest and attendance of both old and young went on growing and increasing, as I had hoped and expected. The whole tone of our worship was changed, made warmer, brighter, more lively—I even dare to say more Christian, more elevating. Even the pulpit, I am assured, responded to the added inspiration, until, two years later, in 1913, owing to the multiplicity of meetings and unending engagements, my heart began to trouble me, showing signs of strain so severe that my doctor strongly advised me, as soon

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as possible, to retire from active duty. I felt the necessity for relief and rest. I could no longer discharge all my duties as formerly, and as I felt they ought to be done. Besides I had begun to feel that my work in Terrace Row, which I had been sent to do, was done—my mission accomplished—so that I could now, reverently, look up and say, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” It was a hard trial, a painful uprooting after forty-two years of happy and prosperous growth. My attachment to the people—who had always been whole-heartedly loving and loyal to me—my tender feelings in relation even to the church buildings which I had planned and laboured so long and so hard to have erected, were such that I could never bear, since I left, to return even to look at them.

XXII

A PARTING

In early August, 1913, I preached my last sermon in Terrace Row, and left the way open to the congregation to choose and call a successor.

Soon a hearty and unanimous call was presented to the Rev. J. G. Paton, M.A., B.D., of Newry, which he at once and cordially accepted. On the 16th of October, 1913, he was installed by the Coleraine Presbytery. In the evening a great reception was held, first in the lecture-hall and then in the church. This meeting was designed to serve a double purpose—that of welcoming the new minister and of saying farewell to me. After addressing a cordial welcome to Mr. Paton, I solemnly committed to him the pastoral care of the congregation and all its interests. I then left the chair and Mr. Paton took it. After this there followed the most impressive, the most trying, and the most gratifying experience of my ministerial life.

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The congregation had very thoughtfully and generously provided some exquisite and handsome parting gifts for me and my family. A lovely sapphire and diamond ring for my daughter, a very large inscribed silver tray for Mrs. Wylie and myself, and, in addition, a very cordial and appreciative address in a magnificently illuminated album. All these were duly presented and accepted, not without tears. After this I addressed the congregation for the last time, giving many touching historical and personal incidents from a very grateful memory. Thus ended, amidst tears and handshaking, my forty-two years ministry in Terrace Row. I felt then, and I still feel, that no man ever served a more hearty, harmonious, responsive, and appreciative people. God bless them !

for

